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Winter/Spring 1986

# New England Journal of Public Policy

A Journal of the  
John W. McCormack  
Institute of Public Affairs

University of Massachusetts  
at Boston

## **New England Journal of Public Policy**

A Journal of the John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs  
University of Massachusetts at Boston

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*New England Journal of Public Policy*

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The *New England Journal of Public Policy* is published twice a year by the John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs, the University of Massachusetts at Boston. Subscriptions are \$20 per year for libraries and institutions and \$9 per year for individuals. Manuscripts and correspondence should be sent to the *New England Journal of Public Policy*, John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs, University of Massachusetts at Boston, Harbor Campus, Boston, MA 02125-3393 (617-929-7275).

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ISSN: 0749-016X

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# Editor's Note

*Padraig O'Malley*

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Today much of public policy debate takes place in a social vacuum. This is so in part because policy issues are often rather arbitrarily assigned to particular and seemingly unconnected disciplines that put a premium on maintaining their separate baronies of intellectual hegemony, and in part because of our too-pervasive propensity to compartmentalize in order to simplify. One of the aims of the *New England Journal of Public Policy* is to invade, as it were, these baronies, to liberate the policy issues held hostage there and release them into a broader, more human context, one that accentuates the idea of connectedness as the hallmark of continuity in public affairs.

Thus the emphasis in this issue of the journal is on the concepts of place and community. What Eudora Welty calls “place in fiction” has its counterpoint in place in public policy. Shaun O’Connell explores this idea in “Divided Houses.” He shows how literary, artistic, and reportorial devices used in local fiction, poetry, autobiography, and social commentary to address elusive but common themes can broaden the frames of reference we use to understand public policy issues. All the works he reviews are written by those who have defined their own sense of what O’Connell calls “New England place.” He finds they illuminate strikingly similar concerns that update “the New England Mind and hint at the state of the nation.” All, to one degree or another, address the question of public policies that seek to remedy injustices, do so, and yet have the effect of creating further inequities. His essay makes good on the journal’s promise in its inaugural issue to extend the examination and analysis of public policy issues into an exploration of the relationships between values and culture and the manner in which the symbiosis of the two is reflected in public policy.

Place and community, of course, have a special significance in *Common Ground*, J. Anthony Lukas’s award-winning book on the impact of court-ordered school desegregation on three families in Boston, recaptured through their eyes and in the larger context of the roles played by five key figures in the public domain. Given the book’s impact on public opinion—not just in Boston but nationwide—and the plethora of overwhelmingly favorable reviews and endorsements that accompanied its publication, we believe the book merits in-depth critical appraisal. Robert Dentler and Shaun O’Connell provide such appraisals. Dentler, who was one of two court experts appointed by Federal Judge W. Arthur Garrity in 1975 to assist the court in the case, takes exception both to Lukas’s presentation of the facts and to his docudramatic method of reporting them. The former, he believes, is distorted, the latter, ill-suited to the purposes of social history. O’Connell faults *Common Ground* for being “hardly

neutral" as well as "ambiguous"—an ambiguity he attributes in part to the "enthralling, dramatic narrative" which has the "novelistic qualities of a thriller," where "selection is everything." As to what the book actually means, O'Connell concludes that *Common Ground* is "a compelling, moving myth on the dissolution and need for new resolution of community," and that "it may be the only place where such divergent elements can stand together."

Ian Menzies is less philosophical and more pragmatic. He puts concepts of place and community in a regional focus, arguing that despite efforts to promote regionalism in New England over the past fifty years, the results have been less than distinguished. His solution: a New England Council of Governments, which would sit in rotation in each of the six State Houses for a fixed number of days annually to consider legislative proposals. Ira Magaziner's analysis of why the Greenhouse Compact—a \$250 million industrial-development project to revitalize Rhode Island's sagging economy—was overwhelmingly voted down by Rhode Island voters in June 1984 is a case study in how a community's inherited folk wisdoms about the workings of the political process thwarted what was, by every objective standard, a worthwhile project, one that had the backing of the state's business, labor, and political constituencies. Magaziner's article also highlights the importance of *presentation* in the policy dissemination process. Too often, the public's perceptions of what the actual outcomes of public actions will be do not reflect the policymakers' perceptions of the intended outcomes.

John Shannon's paper on "de facto new federalism" was presented at a roundtable panel discussion titled "The Changing Nature of Federal/State Relations: The Fiscal Impact on New England," held at the University of Massachusetts at Boston in November 1985. The forum, which was sponsored by the John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs, took place before the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings proposal became law. As matters stand, Gramm-Rudman-Hollings will force a series of across-the-board cuts in nonexempt programs each year if regular budget and appropriations actions fail to achieve annual goals for reducing the deficit. It is unlikely, however, that Gramm-Rudman-Hollings is the last word on the subject of deficit reduction. Both Shannon's article and the discussion that follows make it clear that there are now no easy choices. Not only has the federal government pulled back on the state-local aid front, but it seems inevitable—in fact, unavoidable, in the absence of a tax increase—that this trend will continue. Roger Porter succinctly sets out the bottom-line mathematics of the situation: federal revenues account for 19 percent of GNP, while federal expenditure on defense, interest on debt, and entitlement spending (mainly Social Security and ancillary activities) come to 19.5 percent of GNP. In other words, if all discretionary spending were eliminated and the federal government did nothing but pay the interest on the debt and keep defense and entitlement spending at current levels, there would still be a deficit. Thus the hallmark of the *new* new federalism: as the federal government retrenches, state-local reliance on federal assistance will continue to diminish, so that the states and localities will increasingly have to handle the burden of domestic issues. In short, the centralizing trend of the past fifty years is being reversed—the *place* where an increasing range of public policy issues will be addressed is the state capital, not Washington, D.C.

David Warsh's article on the defense industry and the growth of the Massachusetts economy uses place in yet another context—that of institutions (in this case M.I.T.) and individuals (in this case Jay W. Forrester) situated in particular locations as the

makers of economic history. The main spin-off of the Cold War, he argues, was the computer, and that of the space age the semiconductor. The ramifications of each continue to reverberate through the world economy. His recounting of how Massachusetts was uniquely positioned to take advantage of revolutionary developments in the computer and yet largely missed out on similar developments in the semiconductor demonstrates the manner in which relationships between institutions and individuals (sometimes fortuitous) shape the outcome of far-reaching policy decisions. Not that Warsh leaves much to the fortuitous. Like James Howell in "The Economic Revitalization of New England" (see the *New England Journal of Public Policy*, Spring/Summer 1985), he stresses factors indigenous to the state—the tradition of entrepreneurship, the availability of venture capital, and the dominance of education—as having been the key to the transformation of the state's economy in the post-World War II era.

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Finally, James Carroll's essay on the FBI brings us back to Eudora Welty's sense of the connectedness of "place in fiction" and place in life. "Location," she wrote in *The Eye of the Storm*, "pertains to feeling; feeling profoundly pertains to place; place in history partakes of feeling, as feeling about history partakes of place."

# War Stories—Defense Spending and the Growth of the Massachusetts Economy

David L. Warsh

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*The defense industry has been an integral part of the Massachusetts economy since colonial days, and the Watertown Arsenal and Springfield rifle are virtually synonymous with the capital-intensive arms business of the nineteenth century. But after World War II, here as elsewhere, defense production became far more deeply embedded in the state's division of labor, with the result that today it is hard to tell what is of military origin and what is not: the mini-computer and software industries, in their entirety, are properly viewed as a spin-off from the Cold War and the space race, for example. The region's unique claim on these downstream effects of military spending stems partly from Yankee ingenuity, mostly from a highly developed educational establishment and an influential political delegation to Congress. These institutional matrices are also the chief strongholds of Massachusetts's traditional antimilitary liberalism, an arrangement which gives rise to many paradoxes, but wisdom begins with an appreciation of just how intricate and powerful and resistant to challenge is the military industrial complex itself.*

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Boston's arsenal has a long and significant history. Its ropewalk, shipyards, foundries, armories, and powder factories were among the first in the western hemisphere; they date from the city's deep involvement in the global contest between the English and the French that began in 1689 with King William's War and ended only 125 years later with the defeat of Napoleon.<sup>1</sup> Many nodes have developed in the American defense industry over 300 years, but Boston, like Virginia, has kept its franchise. The powder business went to Delaware; shipbuilding went to satellite ports in New England; military outfitting went south with the textile mills; the rope business went to Iowa; even naval rifles eventually went elsewhere; but New England found new products and new niches.

If Chicago and Los Alamos gave the nation nuclear weapons; if Los Angeles gave it airframes and rockets; if its submarines came mostly from Virginia; if Maryland supplied germs and spies; if the space franchise went to Texas and Florida; then it was here, in New England, that command and control of the new war machine evolved; here that significant strands of radio, radar, sonar, engines, missiles, instrumentation, telemetry, and satellite photography were developed. Even the possibility of a retail trade emerged: it was at a little plant in Salem that agents for Pakistan

sought in 1983 to buy a supply of krytons, electronic switches that can serve as triggers for its nuclear bombs.<sup>2</sup> Yet it was from a small office above Sparr's Drug Store, in the center of Boston's medical-school ghetto, that the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War organized the crusade that won it the Nobel Peace Prize last year, and this was only the most recent of many periodic attempts by organizations whose roots are in New England to diminish the influence of the military.

Anyone who thinks dispassionately will recognize that over the years the war business consistently has enlarged its sphere of operation in the city and the region that surrounds it, even as the business has become less visible. True, the Boston Army Base is being converted into an "international design center"; the navy's old Fargo Building is now an office building; the shipyard in Charlestown is a condominium complex for yuppies; the Watertown Arsenal is now a mall full of shops and restaurants. The antiwar movements that have found fertile soil here have been powerless to deflect the trend. The weapons laboratories' formal ties to universities may have been severed, but the effect of the severing has been largely cosmetic. The arms business in New England has been camouflaged by careful landscaping and a remarkable burst of growth in the region's ploughshare industries—first and foremost, the computer industry—but it is bigger than ever.

Let me say a word about the geography of the defense industry in New England, as I understand it. We think regionally because we think historically and politically: it is Congress, after all, which votes the appropriations for defense contracts. There was a time when each important city in the six New England states was a separate part of the military establishment, its special significance stemming from its proximity to a river: Hartford, Springfield, Boston, Portsmouth, New London, New Haven, Providence. Today, with the vastly altered realities of transportation and communication, to say nothing of the rise of modern corporate management, I believe it is better to think of Boston as the central locale and to regard other cities in New England as subordinate to it, at least in this connection, even though this occasionally does damage to the facts: Burlington, Vermont, for example, is an important beneficiary of military R and D spending on advanced computer techniques, but most of the revenue stream for these projects comes through New York City rather than through Boston. The really important exception is Hartford, which is a nearly independent entity. But for the sake of simplicity, in this article I treat Boston as though it were nearly synonymous with New England.

What is the role of defense in the economy of New England? How does the military economy work? How deeply is it embedded here? How did it grow? Is it good or bad for business? What are the chances that the hopes raised by peace movements of one sort or another will pan out? And what would be the consequences if they did? It is said by economists that New England does well these days because it is aloof from the problem industries: steel, autos, farming, energy; what will happen on that happy day when peace breaks out and the defense industry becomes a problem? We don't need to worry—not much—about the day the war breaks out. As my colleague M. R. Montgomery says, "One airburst over Minuteman National Park and you get rid of Lincoln Labs, Mitre, Itek, Bolt Beranek and Newman, the Peking Gardens restaurant, and the Daniel Chester French statue. One burst would get them all."<sup>3</sup>

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## The Military Industrial Complex

To think about these issues at all is to think about the military industrial complex itself. A quarter of a century has elapsed since President Dwight Eisenhower formally warned of its existence and of the dangers it posed, and his formulation has hardly been improved upon since. "Until the last World War, the United States had no armaments industry," he noted on January 17, 1961, speaking to a radio and television audience.

But now we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense; we have been compelled to create a permanent arms industry of vast proportions. Added to this, three and a half million men and women are directly engaged in the defense establishment. We annually spend on national security more than the net income of all United States corporations.

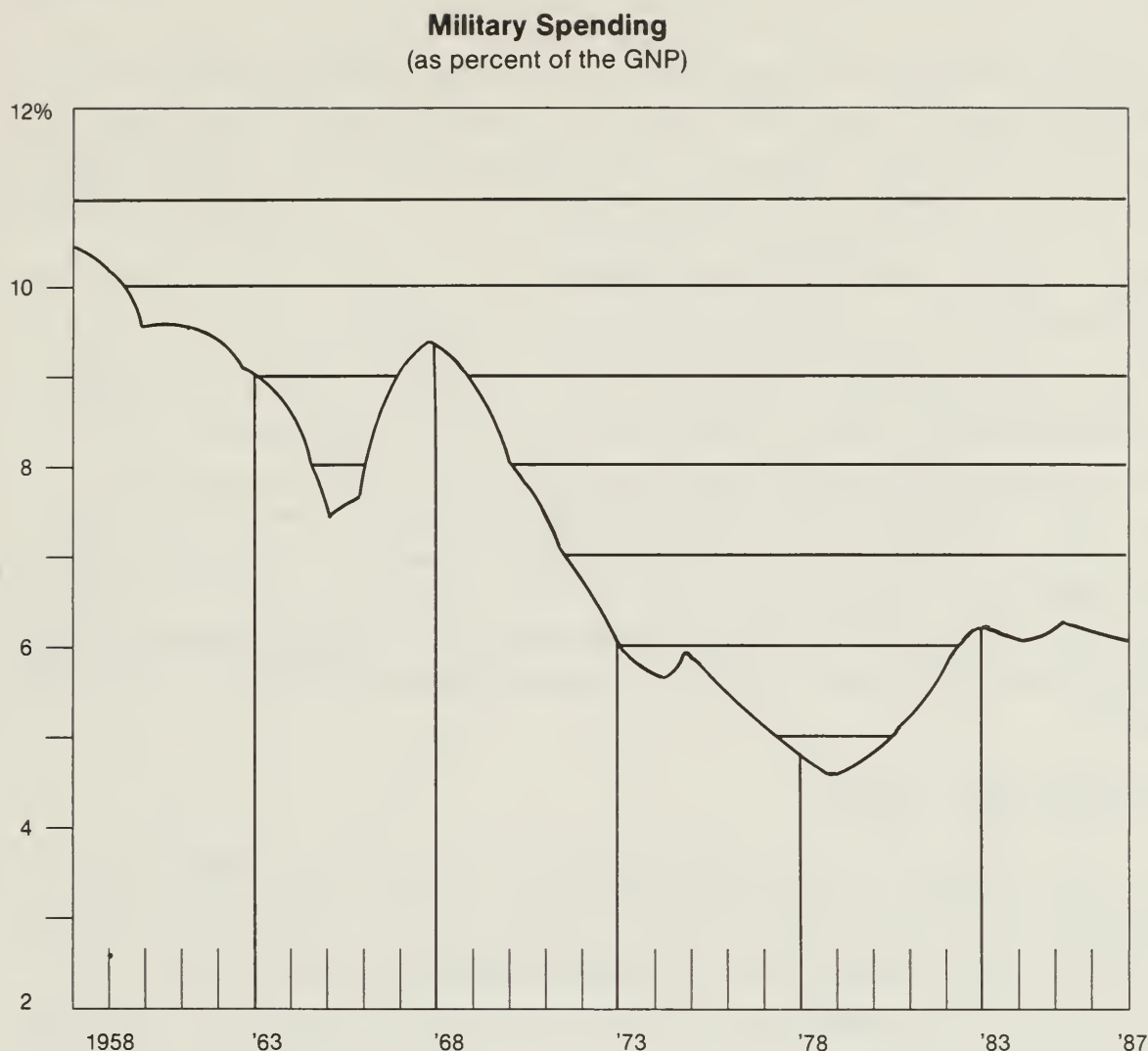
This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence—economic, political, even spiritual—is felt in every city, every State House, every office of the federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must never fail to comprehend its grave implications. . . . Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps the most striking fact of the matter is that, except for the years of the Vietnam War, the role of the military in national life has diminished since Eisenhower's time, despite—or perhaps because of—his warning. Take a look at figure 1. It shows that military spending, as a proportion of the gross national product, declined from around 10 percent when Eisenhower left the White House to just under 5 percent midway through the presidency of Jimmy Carter, before climbing back to what it is today, a shade over 6 percent. The finer points involved in determining these numbers are a matter of some controversy among experts, of course, but the broad shape of the trend is not in dispute.

To be sure, the number of dollars involved and the sheer destructive power that they purchase are more formidable than ever. Eisenhower's biggest budget totaled \$95 billion. In the budget submitted to Congress this past January, President Reagan requested \$312 billion for defense alone and said he planned to spend around \$274 billion—some 28 percent of the entire federal budget, or 6.2 percent of GNP. The price of maintaining the defense establishment is all the more overwhelming if calculated, as Eisenhower did, in terms of opportunity cost: one Arleigh Burke destroyer is worth two big-city hospitals, and one Bradley tank is worth a good suburban school. Yet the fact is that as America has grown rich in the long postwar boom, it has been able to spend less of its income on defense and more on other items, notably health care, where the trend has been just the reverse: in 1965, health care consumed 6.1 percent of U.S. GNP; in 1975, 8.1 percent; and in 1983, 10.8 percent.

If you want to contemplate what has happened with the defense establishment since 1960, go to the main floor of Sidney Kramer's bookstore in Washington, D.C., one block from the White House. This is in many respects the most remarkable bookstore in the world. Its inventory is limited to a few policy-oriented tastes, but within each of these specialties, it offers an utterly comprehensive selection of books

Figure 1



Note: Figures for 1986 and 1987 are estimated.

Source: Tim Carrington, "Call for 12% Increase in Pentagon Funds Faces Almost Certain Defeat in Congress," *Wall Street Journal*, 6 February 1986, 8.

in print. An entire wall is devoted to current books about the military, ranging from World War II porn to the most erudite tracts on strategic issues; on the wall opposite is an even larger array of books devoted to portraying the world economy that has grown up around its armies. The military, like nearly everything else under the sun, has become increasingly complex, specialized, and intricate. Yet except for a few durable classics more notable for the labels they contributed to the debate than for their analysis—C. Wright Mills's *The Power Elite*, for example, or John Kenneth Galbraith's *The New Industrial State*—there are few titles that deal with the historic growth of the military industrial complex. There are some good essays by independent scholars like Jacques Gansler<sup>5</sup> or James Fallows.<sup>6</sup> There are a number of studies by professional historians of technology that make promising beginnings; a good place to make their acquaintance is an anthology by M.I.T.'s Merritt Roe Smith, *Military Enterprise and Technological Change*, with its bibliography on technology and war by Alex Roland.<sup>7</sup> But economists for the most part have ducked the issue of the role of the military in the national economy, mainly because the large institutional

forces at work don't submit easily to the primary tool of the economics trade—the analysis of equilibrium in well-ordered markets.

In real life, however, it is institutions that make economic history. Families, firms, corporations, industry associations, regions of nations and alliances of nations all make tricky decisions to enter into complicated coalitions, thinking forward and backward in time. These arrangements blend financial decisions, tax considerations, design criteria, research and development support, and many other stratagems, subtle and not so subtle, to load the dice in certain ways. Almost always, they involve intricate—if wary—alliances between business and government. Many of these loose legislative-industrial associations have figured prominently in the nation's history: the water and real estate interests that developed southern California, for instance; the electricity lobby, both before and after the advent of nuclear power; the oil, highway, and auto complex that overtook the electrical utility-mass transit network; the builders, bankers, and legislators who created the basis for the postwar housing boom. These "complexes" are not figments of the imagination; they are no less powerful for being little understood. The health complex is perhaps the other truly dominating feature of the landscape today, and by total resources as a percent of GNP, it is nearly twice as large as the defense establishment. But it is highly fractionated. The military industrial complex is the biggest, most fully integrated single unit in the economy.

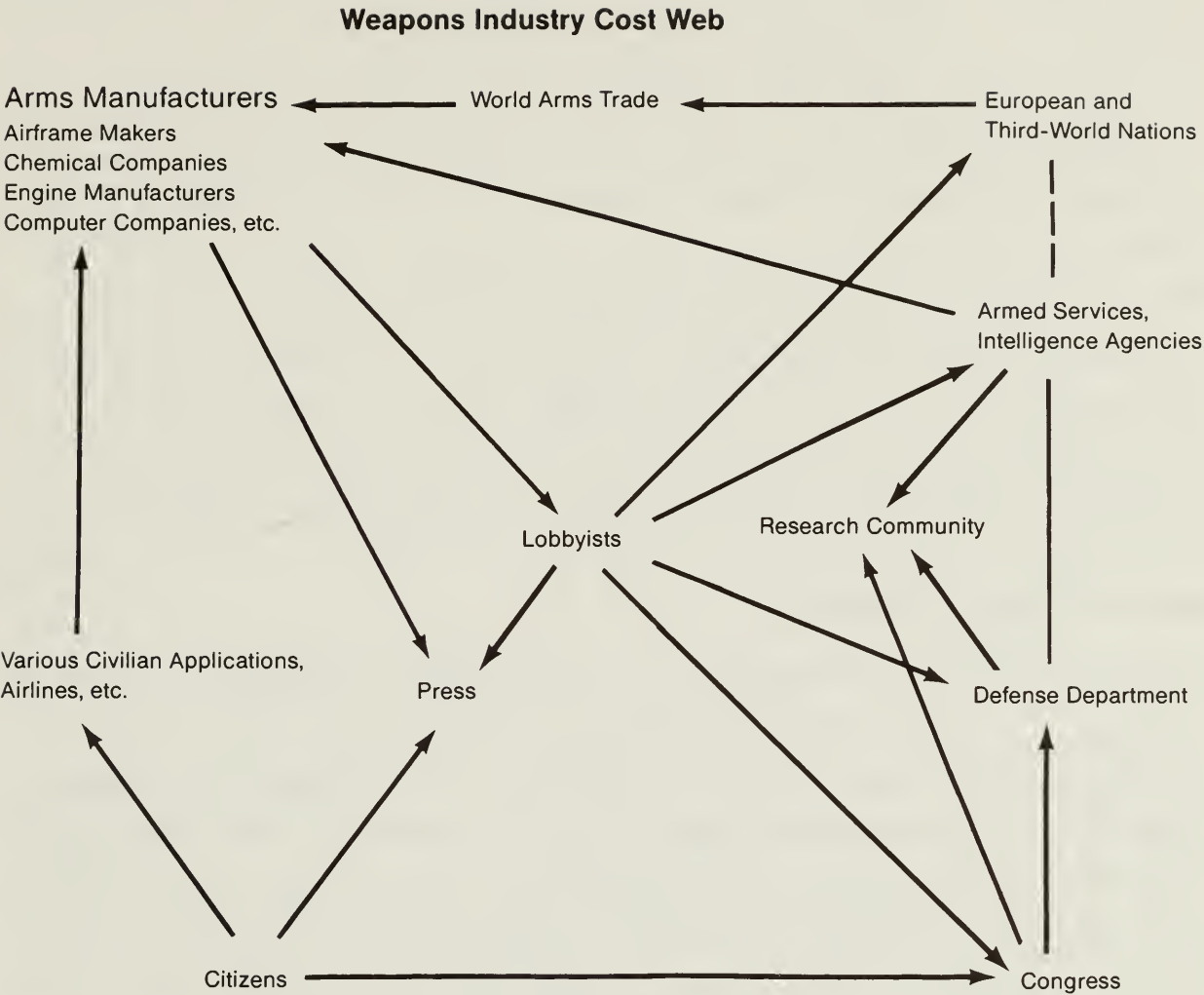
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### How Things Hang Together

For a stylized glimpse of the composition of the military industrial complex, take a look at figure 2, which is titled "Weapons Industry Cost Web." This is a manner of representation I devised some years ago; it's modeled on the food webs that ecologists use to demonstrate who eats whom in particular communities of living things.<sup>8</sup> The idea is to show the relationships among the groups of people who choose to incur the costs of military defense and who must in turn bear them. All the familiar features of the landscape are here, along with some that may not be so familiar. Note, for example, the prominent role of the Third World arms trade: this is a crucial aspect of the arms business, because economies of scale that arise during long production runs are vital to profitability (see Anthony Sampson's *The Arms Bazaar*). Note, too, the civilian businesses of the weapons makers: the commercial airplanes, the computer manufacturers, and so on (see John Newhouse's *The Sporty Game*).

It was clear by Dwight Eisenhower's time that the internal dynamic of the military-industrial complex could cause large sums of money to be spent unwisely, and it became even more clear as time went by. Much of Robert McNamara's tenure as secretary of defense was spent trying to tame the procurement process—yet the process remains untamed. There are many fine investigations of the pathology of inter-service rivalry, from the TFX decision to the C5A scandal to the B-1 bomber. And there is every reason to believe that this process is susceptible to at least some correction. Is it ironic that President Reagan is so tough on the federal budget generally, yet so permissive where the Pentagon is concerned? "Let's face it," he said this past February, "there's a ton of fat in this trillion-dollar government."<sup>9</sup> Does he think there is no fat in the military? Presumably not. But he and Defense Secretary Weinberger seem driven by the logic of overall share of GNP, by the conception of a long cycle of boom and bust in military spending. They are determined to get military spending

Figure 2



Source: David Warsh, *The Idea of Economic Complexity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985)

back to historic levels of around 6 percent of GNP before the cutting sets in again.

It would be helpful to articulate cost webs like the one in figure 2, to assign values to them, to compare them to other systems. Sharper resolution would be helpful, too. Many crucial units are too small to be listed here: the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), which plays a part later in our story; or the intelligence agencies like the CIA, the National Security Agency, and the Defense Intelligence Agency; or the strategic theorists who hammer out the Single Integrated Operational Plans (SIOPS) that guide our policy.<sup>10</sup> Real policy tends to be made in even smaller groups, formal and informal: the interagency breakfast groups in Washington; the so-called Conquistadores del Cielo, the group of aerospace chief executives who meet to play cowboy each summer in Wyoming; the LIDOS, or Litton Industry Dropouts, who formed their views as rivals under Litton boss Tex Thornton and who later changed the face of the industry—United Technology’s Harry Gray in particular; the battalion commanders who passed through the best divisions in Vietnam. These are the levels at which changes occur.

The element that is perhaps most key to understanding the overall behavior of the military-industrial complex—or the behavior of any “complex,” I suppose—is alto-

12 together omitted from the cost web in figure 2. It is the external challenge—or, to put it a little differently, the end to which the product in question is consumed. The external challenge to the wheat industry is the hunger of the bread buyer; in medicine, the external challenge is death, disease, prevention, and so on. In the military case, it is the statecraft of enemy nations. The fear of Soviet expansion has been the driving force of U.S. military development since World War II, after all. It should go without saying that the principals of a system become adept in the manipulation of the most primitive fears involved here, often for their own purposes. Could the space race have been run without Sputnik? (See *The Heavens and the Earth*, Walter A. McDougall's account of the political dimension of the space race.) Yet it seems clear to me that the Cold War has not been entirely a matter of manipulation—even though I know there are many people smarter than I who would argue otherwise. Perhaps there is no more important function than assessing the other side's intentions and order of battle. I thought about drawing in this aspect of large technological systems to emphasize the nature of the overall system, but you've got to tear the web somewhere.

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### Sump? Or Engine of Progress?

The most basic debate concerns the elemental economic effects of military spending on the national economy—and therefore on the economics of the Bay State. These are familiar arguments. At one end of the spectrum there are those who say that defense spending is a sump, an utter waste of money, destructive at worst, unproductive at best. At the other end are those who say that the arms race can be highly stimulative, at least often, and that spin-offs and spillovers from military spending to the civilian economy are far from trivial. But those who take this position quickly divide into optimists and pessimists over the effects of these spin-offs and spillovers. In the latter part of this essay, I will present an episode against which these arguments can be intuitively measured, a case study of how military spending in the 1940s and 1950s prepared the way for a major industrial expansion in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

Fairly typical of proponents of the sump argument is Josh Weston, a New Jersey computer executive who tours the country on behalf of Business Executives for National Security, a 3500-member organization of liberal businessmen. Weston last year told the *Globe's* Mark McCain: "We need to correct a popular misinterpretation that Pentagon spending helps the economy, prevents recessions, and creates vast numbers of jobs. In reality, our investment in defense spending is much more a common sacrifice than a boon to the economy. There are much better ways to spur the economy."<sup>11</sup> A somewhat fuller expression is to be found in the work of Emma Rothschild, who wrote in the *New York Review of Books* in 1980, "The United States may buy itself two things with its \$1 trillion defense budget of 1981 to 1985. The first is an economic decline that comes once or twice in a century. The second is nuclear war."<sup>12</sup> The most pointed case of all has been developed over thirty years by Seymour Melman, a Columbia University professor. He says that the military system has been wrecking the economy ever since World War II.<sup>13</sup>

What these analysts agree on is that military spending retards natural growth, either by siphoning off precious talent or by soaking up capital, or both. Lester Thurow has suggested that the Japanese computer industry will drive the U.S. computer industry out of business because of Star Wars; it may be more fun to design a laser guidance system, but it is more profitable to design a toaster, he says.<sup>14</sup> Melman

makes much, as Eisenhower did, of the sheer size of outlays, greater every year than the net profits of all U.S. corporations. In *Profits Without Production*, published in 1983, he wrote: "That military outlay, making up the largest single block of the economy's equivalent capital funds, makes no contribution whatever to the economic product of the society."<sup>15</sup> The effect of its subtraction is masked, he says, by an economic ideology that insists on counting military output as part of GNP: the GNP numbers get bigger and bigger, but the productive capacity of the nation gets smaller and smaller.

These sump arguments, it seems to me, can be dismissed out of hand, at least in their grander forms, for reasons that will become increasingly clear as we look at the composition of postwar boom. The world has been enjoying an enormous expansion of its productive capacity since 1946, a boom reaching into every corner of the world economy. The international division of labor has advanced rapidly; world markets have emerged in everything from steel to automobiles to electrical equipment—to the disadvantage of the industrial nations, which have coped by finding ever-more complicated products to sell in world markets. They have "moved higher up the value-added chain," as economists put it. All the while, military spending has consistently declined in relative terms—that is, as a portion of the whole—even as it has increased in absolute terms. If the military really is acting as a brake on development, one can only wonder at what would have been the case without it.

The military role in postwar growth has been indisputably stimulative, whether in plastics, airplanes, computers, communications, or pharmaceuticals, let alone high-energy physics. Wartime mobilization had far-reaching effects on corporate organization and planning activities; it had a pervasive effect on values in the civilian sphere as well. Time and again, the military has furnished the money for improbable leaps forward in technology, acting in effect as a clumsy industrial planner. It was the National Defense Highway Act that built the interstate road system, after all. There is much to be said for Seymour Melman as an analyst of the little loops and eddies of defense spending, but overall, his arguments fail to convince. The sump theory is a preserve of quacks, political activists, and well-meaning cranks. Most analysts agree that some form of technological pump priming is at work, with a substantial economic effect in the form of spin-offs and spillovers, as well as a general pumping up of demand: "military Keynesianism," it is often called.

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### Increasing Liberty? Or Iron Cage?

It is not that agreement about the nature of this hothouse effect holds up for very long; no consensus does, it seems, when it comes to the place of war in human history. Perhaps not since Werner Sombart published *War and Capitalism*, just before the outbreak of World War I, has anyone managed to sound genuinely optimistic about the relationship between war and economic growth. Today, the argument seems to be over whether military spending can be considered an engine of economic growth, never mind "progress," or whether it should be seen as something more sinister, the gradual extension of various forms of unwelcome social control over human life, a "progressive lessening of democracy, and an increase of . . . authoritarian techniques," as Carroll W. Pursell, Jr., has put it.<sup>16</sup>

The "dark-siders"—the phrase was coined by historian Brooke Hindle to distinguish those "who counted the ways in which humanity had been submerged and sub-

jugated" by the new machines from those who have emphasized the exhilaration of technology among consumers as well as purveyors<sup>17</sup>—comprise a sophisticated and imaginative group of critics, many of them with ties to M.I.T.: Michael Piore and Charles Sabel, Joseph Weizman, Langdon Winner, Harley Shaiken, and Emma Rothschild are among them. Many other critics have been drawn from the ranks of professional historians of technology. It is David Noble who has taken the sinister spillover interpretation to its extreme. In his remarkably interesting book *Forces of Production*, he argues that a military and managerial preoccupation with the control of worker conduct on the factory floor, conceived during the labor struggles of the 1930s, led to the economically unjustified development immediately after World War II of numerically controlled (i.e., computer-driven) machine tools. According to Noble, the result was that American managers and their military allies won victory over the craft unions but lost the international market for machine tools to the Germans and the Japanese.

In the other, rather more optimistic camp is most everybody else. Numerically controlled tools haven't found their Homer yet, but there are many other chronicles that tell the story of technological change with other processes, usually economic and intellectual, at its heart. Usually they make it clear why the events in question were called "progress." Perhaps the model is Thomas Hughes's extraordinary accomplishment, *Networks of Power*, a book that describes the evolution of modern electric power systems in the three quite different political environments of Berlin, Chicago, and London. There is David Hounshell's account of the exhaustion by Henry Ford of the possibilities of the long production run in *From the American System to Mass Production*. Or take Alfred Chandler's remarkable study of the invention of the corporate executive committee in *Pierre S. Dupont and the Making of the Modern Corporation*, or Nathan Rosenberg and L. E. Birdzell's *How the West Grew Rich*, in which they relate (among many other things) how Andrew Carnegie made his money by driving down the cost of steel by 88 percent over twenty-five years, and how John D. Rockefeller reduced the cost of kerosene by 66 percent in three years. Have the last fifty or one hundred years really been a big mistake?

A key distinction: often the pessimists see industry as learning virtually everything from war. They also tend to see military organization coming to dominate civilian life, as Lewis Mumford occasionally insisted it would. Optimists like Alfred Chandler see the corporations as quite a distinct form of organization, and the military as more often than not learning from the civilian sphere. This seems to me to be generally much closer to the facts. I can't forbear noting that most of the pessimists are not veterans of military service; only someone without firsthand experience in the military could attribute to its leaders the omniscience and articulate will that are articles of faith with, say, David Noble.

Still, this argument between the technological optimists and pessimists among the military Keynesians is much harder to gauge than the disagreement between them and those who deny that military enterprise has often had a stimulative effect. The image of the fifteenth century as a golden age of labor, of jolly yeomen treating each other well in preindustrial America, of alienation merely being a shadow on the horizon, seems a bit much to me.<sup>18</sup> To restate the question: Is the history of technological innovation, as driven by the military, an ultimately cheerful story of "the interaction of fortune, intellectual climate, and the prepared imaginative mind," as the optimist Elting Morison would have it? Or was the pessimist Lewis Mumford correct

when he said the “murky air of the battlefield and the arsenal” hangs over the post-war world?<sup>19</sup> Here we will benefit from a closer look. Let us examine Massachusetts’s chief legacy from the post–World War II arms race.

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### Computers: A Case in Point

It has long been a commonplace that the Cold War and the space race were not especially productive of the kinds of spin-offs generated by World War II. Nose-cone ceramics for baking dishes, Teflon for frying pans, microwave ovens, and a few other trivial consumer-oriented items were all we got for the billions we spent—or so the story goes. This is, to put it simply, a completely mistaken interpretation. The main spin-off of the Cold War was the computer; the main spillover of the space race was the semiconductor; and the economic ramifications of each are still reverberating throughout the world economy.

(I should note that what follows is not yet in any sense a commonly accepted version of events. The advent of computers is altogether left out of Merritt Roe Smith’s book *Military Enterprise and Technological Change*; it is not even mentioned in the volume’s bibliographic essay. Computers are all but ignored, too, in Walter A. McDougall’s political history of the space race. The military origin thesis is not argued aggressively in the general histories of computers and semiconductors written by Stan Augarten, Joel Shurkin, T. R. Reid, and David Ritchie, though each author offers a wealth of detail to support the argument. Nor is the computer industry treated in Richard Zeckhauser and John Pratt’s collection of other writers’ essays on agency theory, which is the problem’s likeliest port of entry into economics.<sup>20</sup> Only David Noble comes unambiguously to the conclusion: “Digital computers, high speed counters that can add and subtract discrete units of information fast enough to simulate complex logical processes, were a product of the war.”<sup>21</sup> Noble is almost certainly correct, and we may expect that independent scholars in coming years will bring this somewhat unpalatable truth to our attention, econometrically and otherwise.)

To be sure, the need for fast numerical calculation had been in the air for a century, as advances in engineering technique intensified the demand for complicated calculations. The prehistory of computers includes the analytical engine of Charles Babbage, a never-built assemblage of gears, cams, and racks the size of a small house; the widely used punch cards of Herman Hollerith; and the glorified adding machines of Howard Aiken, which could do three calculations a second. True, Alan Turing had published his intellectual blueprint for a computer in 1937, well before the war; but none of the men who actually built computers (John Atanasoff, Conrad Zuse, George Stibitz, Howard Aiken, J. Presper Eckert, or John Mauchley) read it. Statesmen and soldiers scarcely comprehended that fast calculations would prove useful in wartime; Germany drafted its leading computer architect.

Yet it was unmistakably in the cauldron of the war that the calculator gave way to the computer. Between Bletchley Park in England, where the problem was code cracking, and the Moore School at the University of Pennsylvania, where the problem was ballistic trajectories, a few dozen inventors, backed by large sums from the defense establishment (“large puddles of money,” in the words of one M.I.T. engineer), created the first electronic, digital, stored-program computers. John Von Neumann recognized the significance of ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer—the first true computer) only after Herman Goldstine told him, while

waiting for a train at the Aberdeen ballistics lab in Maryland, that he was going to visit a machine that could do three hundred calculations a minute. Within weeks, Von Neumann had succeeded in diverting ENIAC from the purpose for which it had been built—the calculation of firing tables for navy guns—to a more pressing project. When ENIAC was switched on in February 1946, its first task was making calculations on the feasibility of the hydrogen bomb.

It was the Cold War that put Massachusetts back in the computer business. Before the war, Vannevar Bush and a team at the Center for Analysis had been working on a very fast calculator, but with the advent of the war, the team dispersed to other projects. After the war, Warren Weaver and the Rockefeller Foundation pumped \$100,000 into resuscitating the project, but by that time another candidate for funds had arisen within the university and from a fairly unexpected quarter. It simply muscled the Rockefeller Foundation and everyone else out of the way.

No single citizen of Massachusetts is responsible for more jobs in the state—or is more nearly anonymous—than Jay W. Forrester. Nebraska-born, Forrester came to M.I.T. in 1939. His wartime assignment in the Servomechanisms Laboratory was to build a universal airplane trainer, one that would simulate the operation of any airplane; after the usual number of twists and turns, he decided that what he needed was a digital computer rather than a machine full of axles and gears. He visited Von Neumann and the Moore School machines, concluded they'd never suit his purposes: they were too unreliable, not fast enough. And so while the rest of the infant computer industry labored away, planning to sell a dozen cartoon-style electronic brains a year, Forrester pounded away for the navy on a real time machine, capable of instantaneous calculation, in order to "put men in the loop."

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### **Saved by the Bomb**

For all his considerable success, Forrester's Whirlwind computer project probably would have been canceled had it not been for the Russian atom bomb that was exploded in August 1949. The idea of nuke-laden Russian planes flying over the North Pole—plus the outbreak of the Korean War—was enough to call into being the Semi-Automatic Ground Environment project, or SAGE, an "electronic radar fence" to be coordinated by computer. Forrester got the job, and he devised little iron doughnuts to replace vacuum tubes as the on-off basis for memory. With a fat air force contract to M.I.T. in his pocket, the company he picked to build these memories—in preference to Raytheon, Remington Rand, and Sylvania—was International Business Machines Corporation. The graduate student he sent to Poughkeepsie to supervise the process was a bright young man named Kenneth Olson.

So it was that in the early 1950s the U.S. government substantially bankrolled IBM's entry into the computer business. For the first few years after the war, the computer market had belonged mainly to Remington Rand, the firm that absorbed the company started by Moore School's Eckert and Mauchley. Raytheon and Engineering Research Associates (later to become Control Data Corporation in Minneapolis) were also active forces. Already a large and highly successful corporation, IBM was interested in electromechanical calculators (particularly those of Howard Aiken at Harvard), mainly as a way of selling more punch-card equipment to big accounts like Commonwealth Edison. A large faction within IBM, often led by Thomas Watson, Sr., was opposed to developing its electronics at all: "There were not unlimited funds within the IBM company," sniffed its director of engineering.<sup>22</sup> Yet the firm's

younger executives saw the new wave coming. Thomas Watson, Jr., related years later that he had become “absolutely panicked” upon learning that two UNIVACs had been installed at the Census Bureau.<sup>23</sup>

The same Korean War that kept Jay Forrester in business at M.I.T. brought IBM’s Tom Watson, Jr., to President Harry Truman to offer the services of the firm to the nation. The offer was pointedly not limited to existing systems, Watson said, and his company decided to go ahead and build a computer for the government and as many other takers as it could find—that was the Defense Calculator. But not until an IBM engineer named John McPherson went to a committee meeting in June 1952 to organize the Second Joint Computer Conference did he learn that Jay Forrester at M.I.T. was looking for a commercial manufacturer for his iron core memory. “One of the best payoffs that belonging to a professional society could produce,” he said later. “I should have gotten a finder’s fee.”<sup>24</sup>

Suddenly, the government was precisely the huge honey pot for which Thomas Watson, Jr., had hoped two years earlier. To that point, computer building at IBM had been a tentative affair. But with SAGE, the company began by hiring thirty engineers—heavy-hitters like Gene Amdahl, Erich Bloch, Charles Bashe, Werner Bucholtz, Robert Crago, and Lawrence Kanter, among others—who were trained in the new electronic style and who promptly pushed out of the main engineering lab the old Edisonian tinkerers who had built the punch-card business. Under the SAGE contract, the company hired between seven and eight thousand engineering, programming, and maintenance workers, most of whom stayed on. During the 1950s, more than half of IBM’s domestic electronic data processing revenues came from SAGE and from work on the B-52 bomber program in the Korean War.

IBM’s big breakthrough—the Model T of the computer industry, Stan Augarten calls it—was its Model 650, announced in July 1953 and delivered in December 1954. Within a year, 120 machines had been installed and another 150 had been ordered, despite the product planning department’s having declined to forecast a single sale. A series of improved models followed; yet as late as 1955, there were still company directors who wanted to get out of the business. But by then the company was ready to make the first of a series of dramatic gambles with its own money instead of government funding.

Nor was IBM the only one to roll the dice in those years. At about the same time, Kenneth Olson—the graduate student who had acquired a permanent disdain for IBM’s strategic style while supervising the production of SAGE’s memory—headed off to open his own memory company in an old abandoned mill in Maynard, Massachusetts. He called it Digital Equipment Corporation. Dozens of other young electrical engineers were going into business for themselves then, too. The rest, as they say, is history—rich, complicated, absorbing.

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### **The \$100 Billion Un-sure Thing**

By this reckoning, virtually the entire modern computer business can be said to have been a fairly direct outgrowth of those few years, say, from 1940 to 1955. In 1985, that amounted to around 265,000 jobs, or about 9 percent of the 3 million jobs in Massachusetts. Traditional manufacturing jobs accounted for 675,000 of the total. So does it matter, thirty years later, that IBM in 1953 “ate Raytheon’s lunch,” as the businessmen say? Does it matter that the first computer factory went to Poughkeepsie? The fact remains that, thanks mainly to the Servomechanisms Laboratory at M.I.T.,

Massachusetts was able to make a firm entry into the fledgling electronic computer industry in the 1950s. The Commonwealth's history in semiconductors, however, hasn't been nearly as triumphant. Even though Lincoln Laboratories pioneered in investigating the electrical properties of silicon, interest in the technology flagged after World War II, and when William Shockley, who had invented the transistor at Bell Laboratories, returned to Stanford University to pursue his research, the result was that the area around San Francisco became dominant in the new technology—the Boston area fell far behind.

Nor was it simply new business in Massachusetts that benefited from the wartime spending boom. General Electric had arrived in Massachusetts in the 1890s, when Thomas Edison's firm bought one of its strong competitors, Lynn's Thompson Housatonic Electric Company. The smaller company's management promptly took over the larger firm, and GE acquired a strong connection with M.I.T. (It was Gerard Swope, for example, who in 1930 recruited Karl Compton to preside as president over the modern transformation of the school.) Raytheon Corporation had been a by-product of GE's struggle with Bell over who would control the market for commercial radio. Both firms grew large and diverse on military contracts during World War II. The manufacture of airplane engines, which had flourished along the Connecticut and Housatonic rivers since World War I because of the presence there of the nation's most sophisticated metal-cutting trade, boomed accordingly: when General Electric decided to enter the market in 1941, the government built a plant for it in Everett. Some firms gorged on military spending, grew fat, and eventually failed: Curtis Wright is a prime example. But around a solid industrial core, dozens of little companies took root and grew: a rocket-fuel plant learned to make bleach for newspaper pulp instead; a company that invented shock-proof mounts for shipboard radars turned to pylons for jet engines; and so on.

Looking backward, 1942 seems to be the year in which the rules of the game changed decisively. That was when the Radiation Lab was established at M.I.T. to pursue the development of the British invention of radar. Again, the details are illuminating: Boston got the job, in preference to Bolling Field in Washington, after M.I.T.'s James Killian arranged hangar and lab space in a few hours. The Radiation Lab undertook three jobs—to build a flying radar, a gun-laying system, and a long-range navigation system that became LORAN—and to this end assembled a large collection of theoretical physicists. It was no foregone conclusion that this would work: M.I.T. had to overcome objections of the man who put Bell Labs together, Frank Jewett, who couldn't believe that a group of young scientists working in an academic environment could do the job. By the end of the war, 20 percent of the nation's top physicists had passed through the lab and had compiled an unprecedented record of scientific and technological success.

It is worth inquiring a little further into the nature of this watershed. Frank Jewett's objection to the establishment of the Radiation Lab was not unique. Before World War II, America had relatively little experience with large-scale organization for research. But whether in the Manhattan Project, the Radiation Lab, the Office of Strategic Services, the "whiz kids" in the army air force, the group around William Norris at the Office of Naval Intelligence, or a hundred other groups of slightly lesser magnitude, the successes were so immediate and so far-reaching that they changed forever the way business is done: this was nothing less than the very invention of "high tech." The nub of the process has been identified by Gerald Holton in *Thematic*

### *Origins of Scientific Thought:*

What took place was analogous to impedance matching, the method by which an electronics engineer mediates between the different components of a larger system. That is, special coupling elements are introduced between any two separately designed components, and these allow current impulses or other message units to pass smoothly from one to the other. Similarly, in these quickly assembled groups of physicists, chemists, mathematicians, and engineers, it was found that the individual members could learn enough of some one field to provide impedance matching to one or a few other members of the group.<sup>25</sup>

I want to emphasize that this threshold phenomenon is at the heart of the success of all the large units with which we are concerned here: universities, cities, and nations, as well as research teams.

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### **Situation Normal, All Fouled Up**

Not that the transfer of military technology to civilian markets has ever been easy. The commercial success of the computer has been one of the big surprises of the postwar era, even to its enthusiasts, and not the least surprising part was the applicability of computers to relatively intimate situations. That the extent of this potential was not apparent, even to the smart guys who pioneered in the development of the machine, is fascinating. Aiken had pooh-poohed it; Eckert had doubted; even the great Von Neumann had thought of computers mainly as calculators, and had failed to foresee their ultimate utility as storehouses of information. Even IBM failed to appreciate how flexible the machines could be made; that was “the M.I.T. idea,” as Kenneth Olson of Digital Equipment has described it, and the role played by the Massachusetts firms—DEC, Wang, Data General—in forcing IBM’s hand is still underappreciated. True, the record of the computer industry is littered with sad stories of companies, Raytheon and General Electric among them, that tried to get into the industry and failed. But in 1982, there were a half million general-purpose computers in use, and the number was growing by 40 percent a year.

Nor is it that the military never makes mistakes—least of all that. The navy tried hard to pull the plug on Jay Forrester’s Whirlwind computer, for example. The National Bureau of Standards, working in deepest secrecy for the navy, began Project Tinkertoy in 1950 to create components that could be put together hierarchically with ease. More than \$5 million later, it turned out that Tinkertoy was based on vacuum tubes instead of newly invented transistors. Similarly, the Signal Corps spent \$25 million on RCA’s attempt to create the same kind of modules, this time with transistors, just as the integrated circuit was coming into use. On the other hand, the government often bets right. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the Defense Advanced Projects Research Agency funded much of the early work on time sharing and networking, two of the standard techniques for getting computers to work together. The military research is like the old saw about advertising: half of it is wasted—if only we knew which half.

Close to the truth is what Leo Steg says about the effect of military targeting. For twenty-three years Steg was head of General Electric’s Science Laboratory; he says the trick is for the government to announce a standard, to set a target for which everyone can shoot.<sup>26</sup> Then smart guys, like the Texas Instruments crew in the case of semiconductors, can either hang along on the outside of the camp or join the governmental effort, and it doesn’t really matter who hits the jackpot. Integrated cir-

cuit coinventor Jack Kilby of Texas Instruments worked on RCA's Micromodule despite his loathing of the technology involved. Something of the same sort was at work when M.I.T.'s John C. Sheehan succeeded in synthesizing penicillin where a huge wartime effort had failed. In addition to this "outsider" mechanism, there is the effect of all that money: the government can afford to back a lot of losers in order to find one winner.

It was in this way that semiconductors made their way into the commercial marketplace, via the Apollo space program and a hundred less conspicuous military uses. The first integrated circuits were offered for sale in 1961, but government sales constituted 100 percent of the market until 1964, and the federal government remained the largest buyer of chips for years after that, according to T. R. Reid. But just as had been the case with computers, as manufacturers made more and more chips, their manufacturing costs fell. By 1969, when IBM bowed to the inevitable and began using chips in all logic circuitry, chip makers finally "had a market that would dwarf the space and defense business," Reid says.<sup>27</sup> By the late 1970s, when the attention of the semiconductor firms had drifted away from defense, the Defense Department concocted a program that brought their representatives back to the program: the Very High Speed Integrated Circuit project.

It is in this light that the headlines about military spending should be read, with skepticism for strong stands on either side of the issue. Unexpected ties between government spending and civilian industry are everywhere.

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### Local Politics, National Agendas

What place is there for politics in this story? Well, certainly there is a very large one, and it deserves to be told in detail elsewhere. No one understands the political realm better than my colleague Martin Nolan, who spent fifteen years in Washington, D.C., before taking over the editorial page of the *Boston Globe*. When I asked him about the role the congressional delegation had played in shaping the composition of the defense industry in Massachusetts, he said that the politicians had won some and lost some.

For instance, the NASA mission control center should, by all rights, be in Cambridge, Massachusetts. But Albert Thomas of—guess where?—Houston, Texas, happened to be head of the Independent Agencies Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee at the time, and even with their guy in the White House, Massachusetts wasn't able to get it. The Texans stole it fair and square. The Massachusetts delegation was pretty good over the years, but there was nobody better than the Texans at getting on the important committees. One of their guys was on the Armed Services Committee because his district had a lot of goats and he figured you could sell goat skins to the military easier than to anyone else. The influence of the Massachusetts delegation began to fade in the 1960s; Leverett Saltonstall didn't stand for reelection in 1966; Bill Bates died and was replaced by Michael Harrington in 1970; Phil Philbin was defeated by Father Drinan on a strong antiwar program in the primary the very year before he would have taken over the Armed Services Committee. The Vietnam War slowed down; so did the moon program. Then Richard Nixon sent Elliot Richardson—Elliot Richardson, of all people—to shut the bases. There was gloom and doom all around.<sup>28</sup>

That was, of course, the dark before the dawn. The biggest boom since the end of the nineteenth century was about to energize the Massachusetts economy. What hap-

pened? Well, in the view presented here, the main motors of the boom were the commercial phases of the high-tech and minicomputer revolutions, engines that had started turning some thirty years earlier. That interpretation is all right with Nolan—as far as it goes. He cites the thesis of Don K. Price, who in his book *The Scientific Estate* credits Rep. Thomas P. O'Neill with being “the hero of a turning point in [scientific] history.”<sup>29</sup> When O'Neill, in January 1963, declined a very favorable proposition from NASA to hire engineers for Washington jobs on a strictly nonpartisan basis, Price wrote, he was acting on the basis of a deep understanding of the relationship between political and economic power: “If he turned down Washington jobs on behalf of his constituents, it was because he was interested in a far more substantial form of patronage: contracts in Boston for industrial corporations and universities.”<sup>30</sup> The balance had decisively shifted away from standing armies to technological weapons and the experts who built them—wizards, in Churchill's phrase, or boffins, in the British slang of the war—and increasingly, the politicians realized it. The definitive version of the political history of these remarkable last forty years awaits Nolan's own accounting of the period, but until then, Price's book makes the best reading.

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### Boffins Regnant

The intricately connected social world in which all this activity took place is the vital counterpart to the abstraction of the cost web that we met earlier. Politics are just part of it, and in the short run, not the most important part. At least as important as the legislative leadership has been the administrative apparatus of science and technology—the boffinate, if you will. M.I.T.'s Vannevar Bush was science adviser to President Roosevelt. M.I.T.'s James Killian and Harvard's George Kistiakowsky were advisers to President Eisenhower, M.I.T.'s Jerome Wiesner adviser to President Kennedy, Princeton's Don Hornig (a Harvard College graduate and Harvard Ph.D.) to President Johnson. Lee DuBridge, who had directed M.I.T.'s Radiation Lab during the war, was adviser to President Nixon; so was Exxon's Edward David, Jr., whose doctorate came from M.I.T. H. Guyford Stever, who had spent twenty-five years at M.I.T., served Presidents Nixon and Ford; M.I.T.'s Frank Press was adviser to President Carter. Ronald Reagan's science adviser, George Keyworth II, was the first man to hold the job who never went to school or taught in Boston—and he was born in Boston.

These high-ranking bureaucrats, who commanded the pinnacle of what was an extensive administrative machinery of science, were in a position to send important business to New England, and often did. Nor did the appeal of the universities to business operate only through their influence on the federal machinery. Harvard University, too, has been highly successful in furnishing advisers to government, but there is an important flip side to M.I.T.'s efforts: since the school is far less rich than Harvard, it has had to forge intricate connections to industry as well as to government in search of funds. The modern phase of this outreach began in 1948, with its industrial liaison program. The result is that M.I.T. has a degree of clout with the corporate community that far exceeds that of Harvard.

If the dense educational and research establishment is the single dominant feature of the business infrastructure in Boston, it is hardly the only element that matters. Important also is the city's venture capital community, its banks and investment managers: the availability of cash to bring along fledgling enterprises has been

another linchpin in Boston's development since it lured Alexander Graham Bell more than one hundred years ago. Also important is the willingness of the Commonwealth to let inventors keep their wealth, if and when they earn it. Walter Muther, president of the Associated Industries of Massachusetts and dean of the State House lobbyists, contends that the legislative supervision of inheritance and capital gains is the unheralded key to the state's success in attracting and keeping start-up companies.<sup>31</sup>

It may be that low taxes attract businesses and high taxes drive them out. Still, the map of states, viewed through this lens of defense spending, will turn up cities—like hot spots of infrared emissions—whose postwar growth has been built in large part around their universities: Cal Tech/UCLA, Berkeley/Stanford, M.I.T./Harvard, Columbia/New York University, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Chicago/Northwestern University, the cluster of universities around Washington, D.C., and so forth. Only geographic distinction confers greater advantage when it comes to competing for Pentagon dollars. Indeed, it is possible to make some comparisons of size and shape here. In table 1, which is based on a recent study by Data Resources, Inc., Massachusetts is seen to be among the top ten states in defense spending as a share of total state product, the local contribution to GNP. At 6.6 percent, it is behind Virginia (10.4 percent); Connecticut (9.7 percent); Hawaii (8.7 percent); Washington (7.9 percent); California (7.9 percent); Maryland (7.3 percent); and Alaska (7.3 percent); and ahead of Missouri (6.5 percent); Mississippi (6.4 percent); and New Hampshire (6.4 percent). Moreover, DRI calculates that Massachusetts will share disproportionately in the growth of military spending through the rest of the decade, along with a handful of other states. Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington are all expected to obtain 15 percent or more of their growth from military spending during the next five years.

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### What Next?

We are currently caught up in a remarkable new evolution, one as laden with potential economic benefits as with terror. I mean, of course, Star Wars, as the president's Strategic Defense Initiative has become known. In fact, it has less to do with nail guns and x-ray lasers than with software. The opposition to Star Wars is bucking a huge wave that is breaking over the engineering and electronic business, having to do with the conquest of new frontiers, namely, the design and manipulation of very complex systems—the issues that crop up when engineers try to design chips with a million and more gates or to write computer programs with hundreds of thousands of lines.

What about Star Wars as a weapon? Certainly I am deeply skeptical, but my skepticism is grounded in little more than a newspaperman's common sense. A low level of research and development is one thing. But is it possible to fund the research and keep the weapons at home? Perhaps. Certainly to do so will require a considerable amount of fairly stiff-backed opposition on the part of a wide segment of the research community. One needs to keep firmly in mind the idea that technologies are systems with enormous momentum, and that opposition on a local level, along only one part of their advancing salient, is doomed to fail. Yet, as Thomas Hughes says, external forces can redirect even high-momentum systems.

It can be said with confidence, I think, that once again some huge payoffs await breakthroughs made along the lines taken by government funding. Whether they

Table 1

## Defense and Non-Defense Output by State, 1985

State	Production (billions of dollars)		Defense Share of Total (percent)
	Defense	All Other	
Alabama	4.3	96.0	4.3
Alaska	1.1	13.4	7.3
Arizona	4.1	73.8	5.3
Arkansas	2.0	58.8	3.4
California	63.1	732.0	7.9
Colorado	4.8	106.8	4.3
Connecticut	9.8	91.4	9.7
Delaware	0.5	19.2	2.5
Dist. of Colum.	2.0	41.8	4.6
Florida	13.8	283.7	4.6
Georgia	7.3	165.8	4.2
Hawaii	2.3	24.4	8.7
Idaho	0.6	23.1	2.4
Illinois	9.7	349.3	2.7
Indiana	7.2	161.7	4.3
Iowa	1.7	85.9	2.0
Kansas	3.8	78.6	4.6
Kentucky	3.0	91.5	3.1
Louisiana	5.3	140.9	3.6
Maine	1.5	26.4	5.3
Maryland	8.6	108.1	7.3
Massachusetts	12.0	167.9	6.6
Michigan	7.2	275.0	2.6
Minnesota	4.5	126.4	3.5
Mississippi	3.7	54.3	6.4
Missouri	9.4	135.7	6.5
Montana	0.5	19.7	2.5
Nebraska	1.2	48.5	2.4
Nevada	0.7	25.4	2.6
New Hampshire	1.8	25.5	6.4
New Jersey	8.7	220.8	3.8
New Mexico	1.7	31.7	5.0
New York	21.7	478.8	4.3
North Carolina	5.6	178.5	3.0
North Dakota	0.5	16.8	2.7
Ohio	11.8	307.8	3.7
Oklahoma	3.4	85.6	3.8
Oregon	1.6	63.6	2.5
Pennsylvania	13.3	322.0	4.0
Rhode Island	1.3	26.7	4.7
South Carolina	3.6	83.0	4.2
South Dakota	0.4	19.0	2.0
Tennessee	3.8	127.0	2.9
Texas	24.6	532.6	4.4
Utah	2.3	41.8	5.3
Vermont	0.6	12.6	4.3
Virginia	16.5	142.4	10.4
Washington	8.9	103.5	7.9
West Virginia	1.3	42.5	2.9
Wisconsin	3.5	145.0	2.4
Wyoming	0.5	17.5	2.7

Source: George F. Brown, Jr., "Regional Prospects for Defense Supplying Industries," Data Resources, Inc., 30 April 1985

come inside the research effort or outside it is, as always, open to doubt. It is this ambiguity that has rendered the Europeans relatively enthusiastic backers of the SDI—the Star Wars program is “a mini-Marshall Plan” that will get England growing again, says Sir Peter Emery, a British MP and businessman<sup>32</sup>—while the Japanese remain relatively skeptical; despite more than a year of formal study at the cabinet level, the Japanese government has yet to declare its support. What seems likely to emerge from the next twenty years of research is not so much new ways of manufacturing computers as new ways of controlling and linking them. These techniques may offer a unique competitive advantage to the companies that possess them. After all, America has seen its domestic television-manufacturing industry move offshore without noticeably bad results. Does it matter who makes the cathode-ray tubes if the real money is in the television networks? It may be the same with software and the design and manufacture of the most advanced computers.

Considerations like these make it devilishly hard to think about defense economics. But to ignore them is to willfully misunderstand the questions. In the past century, military spending has often been a powerful accelerant to economic growth. That is one reason—perhaps the main reason—it is so very difficult to curb.

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## Notes

1. The best single account of Boston's military beginnings is the abridged edition of Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986).
2. See Alain Cass and Simon Henderson, “The Nuclear Threat Behind Pakistan's Grim Pursuit,” *Financial Times* (13 June 1985): 3.
3. M. R. Montgomery, personal conversation with the author, 23 January 1986.
4. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1960–61* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Federal Register of the National Archives Records Service).
5. Jacques S. Gansler, *The Defense Industry* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1980).
6. James Fallows, *National Defense* (New York: Random House, 1981).
7. Merritt Roe Smith, ed., *Military Enterprise and Technological Change* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985).
8. Cost webs are discussed in David Warsh, *The Idea of Economic Complexity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985).
9. “Reagan: I'll Sell Agencies,” *Boston Sunday Herald*, 9 February 1986, 10.
10. For well-informed accounts of the worlds of SIOPS theorists, see Fred Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983), and Gregg Herken, *Counsels of War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985).
11. Mark McCain, “Business Group Takes on the Defense Establishment,” *Boston Sunday Globe*, 23 June 1985, 10.
12. Emma Rothschild, “Boom and Bust,” *New York Review of Books*, 3 April 1980.
13. Seymour Melman, *Profits Without Production* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983).
14. Lester Thurow, “How to Wreck the Economy,” *New York Review of Books*, 14 May 1981.
15. Melman, *Profits Without Production*, xv.
16. Carroll W. Pursell, Jr., “The Problematic Nature of Late American Technology,” in *The History of American Technology: Exhilaration or Discontent?* ed. David Hounshell (Wilmington, Del.: Hagley Museum and Library, 1984).

17. Brooke Hindle, "The Exhilaration of Early American Technology: A New Look," in *The History of American Technology: Exhilaration or Discontent?*
18. The criticism of present-day arrangements by the design-of-work people seems to me to be highly useful. The utopian task of imagining how life could be different is an important function; we should—and do—welcome criticism of present styles of the organization of work. One has only to think of the changing role of women to see how misleading at any particular time the conventional wisdom can be which states that the present way is the only natural way.
19. I am indebted to Merritt Roe Smith's essay in *Military Enterprise and Technological Change* for these quotations.
20. This article's stylized account of the origins of the digital electronic computer is drawn from Stan Augarten, *Bit by Bit* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1984); Joel Shurkin, *Engines of the Mind* (New York: Norton, 1983); T. R. Reid, *The Chip* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984); David Ritchie, *The Computer Pioneers* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985); Karl L. Wildes and Nilo A. Lindgren, *A Century of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at MIT, 1882–1982* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985); James R. Killian, Jr., *The Education of a College President* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985); Franklin M. Fisher, James W. McKie, and Richard B. Mancke, *IBM and the U.S. Data Processing Industry: An Economic History* (New York: Praeger, 1983); Emerson Pugh, *Memories That Shaped an Industry* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984); and Leonard S. Reich, *The Making of American Industrial Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). John W. Pratt and Richard J. Zeckhauser introduce agency theory in *Principals and Agents: The Structure of Business* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1985).
21. David Noble, *The Forces of Production* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 49.
22. Fisher, McKie, and Mancke, *IBM and the U.S. Data Processing Industry*, 12.
23. Ritchie, *The Computer Pioneer*, 243.
24. Pugh, *Memories That Shaped an Industry*, 93.
25. Gerald Holton, *Thematic Origins of Scientific Thought* (Harvard University Press, 1973), 410.
26. David Warsh, "Star Wars: Boon or Bane for Economy?" *Boston Globe*, 21 November 1985, 57.
27. Reid, *The Chip*, 126.
28. Martin F. Nolan, personal conversation with the author, 7 February 1986.
29. Don K. Price, *The Scientific Estate* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965).
30. *Ibid.*, 21.
31. Walter Muther, personal conversation with the author, 26 January 1984.
32. Flora Lewis, "Foreign Affairs," "Upside Down Values," *New York Times*, 9 February 1986, sec. 4, 23.

# De Facto New Federalism:

## Phase II?

*John Shannon*

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*1985 marked year seven for de facto new federalism, the fiscal decentralization process nudged along by strong public support for the Reagan administration's conservative policies and growing fiscal stringency at the federal level. New federalism is most dramatically illustrated by the national government retreat along the entire state-local aid front—a kind of “sorting out”—as an increasing share of the federal budget goes to strictly national government programs. The mounting public concern about massive federal deficits will quicken the federal pullback on the state-local aid front. The only question is whether it will be a ragged retreat or an orderly withdrawal. The tightening fiscal squeeze in Washington is also slowly but surely reversing a fifty-year centralizing trend—the power pendulum is swinging back toward states and localities, thereby creating a better balance within our federal system.*

*The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the members of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations.*

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De facto new federalism is a sorting-out process, but not the nice, neat, orderly one that political scientists and reformers yearn for. Nor has it evolved along the tax turnback and program swap lines advocated in 1982 by the Reagan administration. Rather, this new federalism (which actually started in the latter half of the Carter administration) is most dramatically illustrated by the national government retreat along the entire state-local aid front.

Nevertheless, de facto new federalism clearly represents a “sorting out” of sorts. As more and more federal resources are being earmarked for national government programs—defense, Social Security, Medicare, and payment of the interest on a \$1.8 trillion U.S. debt—state and local governments are being forced to fend for themselves.

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### **New De Facto Federalism vs. Old Federalism**

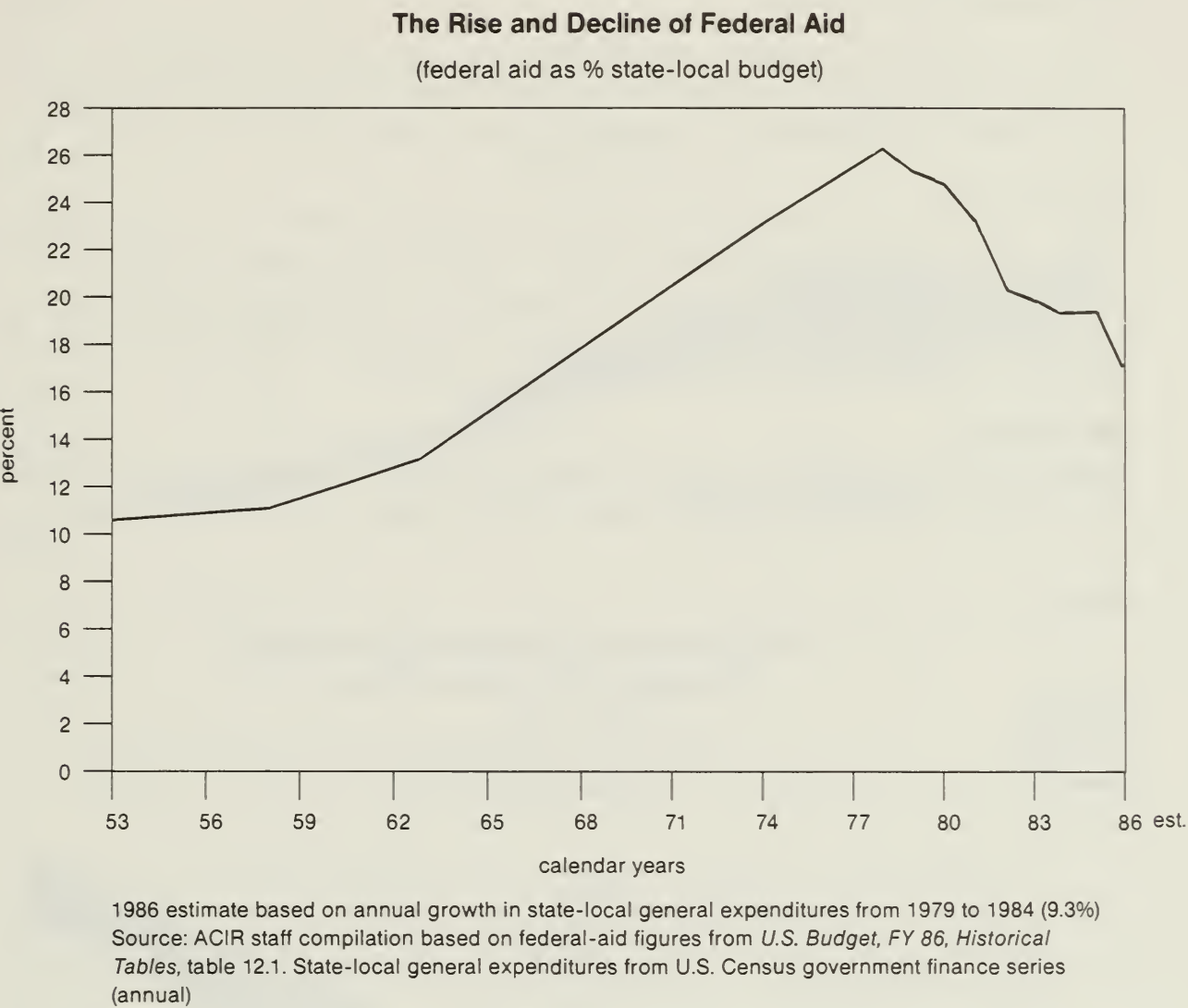
The new fiscally austere federalism can best be understood by comparing it to the affluent old federalism, which began at the end of the Korean War and ended in 1978—the year of the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and the California taxpayer revolt.

Old federalism was characterized by steadily growing local dependence on federal aid as the nation increasingly looked to Washington to set the domestic agenda. New

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federalism is marked by steadily decreasing state-local reliance on federal-aid dollars as the country increasingly looks first to the localities and then to the states to handle domestic issues (see figure 1).

Figure 1



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Old federalism was intrusive in character—a steadily growing number of federal aid “strings” and conditions were designed to alter state and local budgetary priorities and to race state and local fiscal engines. New federalism is becoming increasingly extrusive in character—the federal government is pulling aid funds and tax resources from state and local governments to strengthen the financing of its own national programs.

Old federalism represented a continuous but unplanned advance of the national government into areas that had heretofore been the exclusive province of state and local governments. New federalism represents a continuous but unplanned retreat from federal positions staked out during the Great Society era.

Old federalism called on Washington to provide extra aid to stabilize state and local finances during periods of economic recession. New federalism calls on the states to help themselves by setting up rainy day funds to cushion their finances from the shock of economic downturns.

Old federalism flourished in a political environment that resolved the political and

fiscal doubts in favor of social equity concerns, domestic public-sector growth, and defense contraction. De facto new federalism operates in a political climate that resolves the doubts in favor of economic development, defense expansion, and domestic public-sector containment.

**The Gathering Fiscal Storm**

Phase I of de facto new federalism (1978–85) evolved against the backdrop of a gathering fiscal storm and produced a remarkable contrast: expenditure acceleration in Washington and expenditure deceleration at the state-local level (see figure 2).

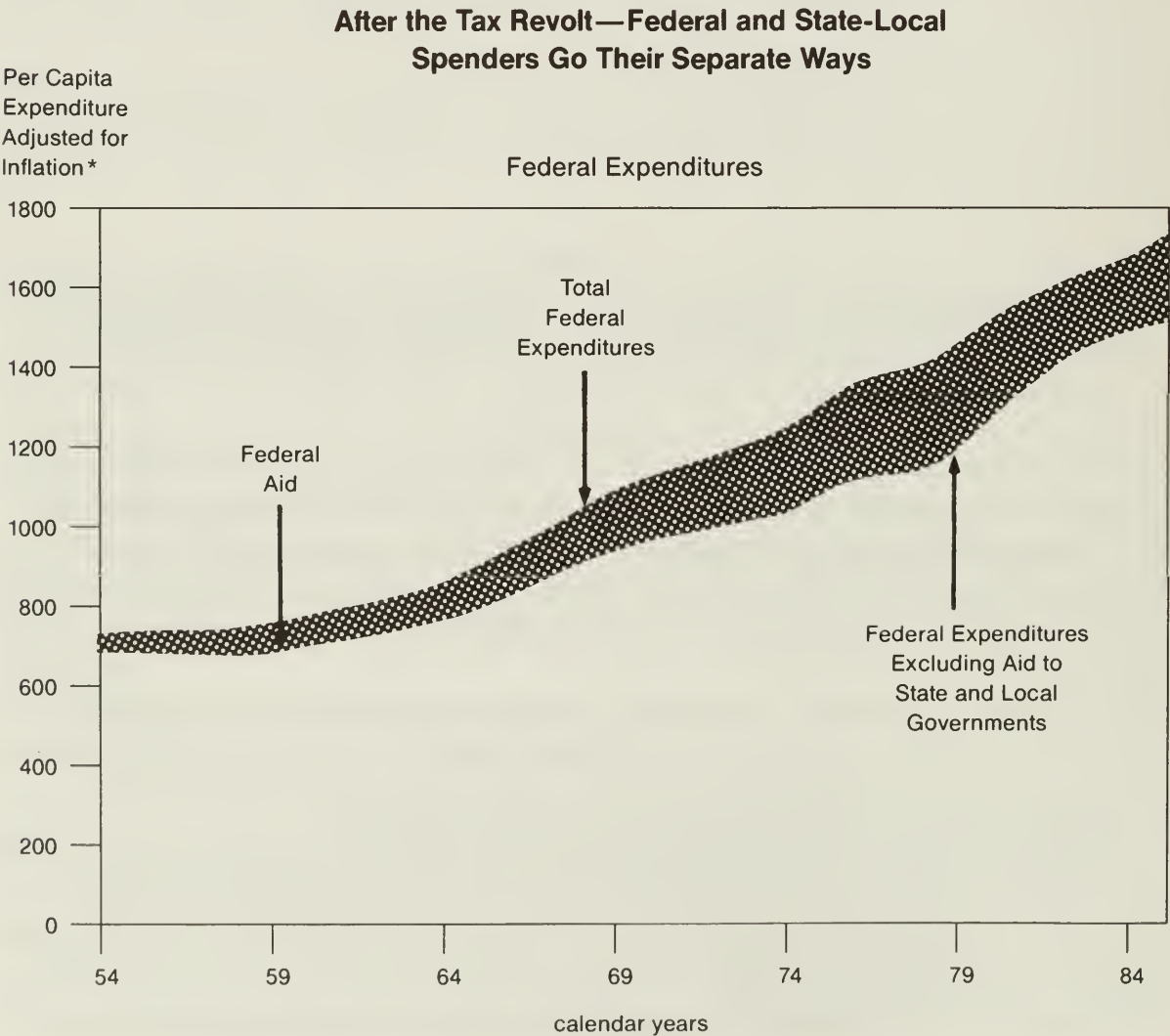
**The Three Rs**

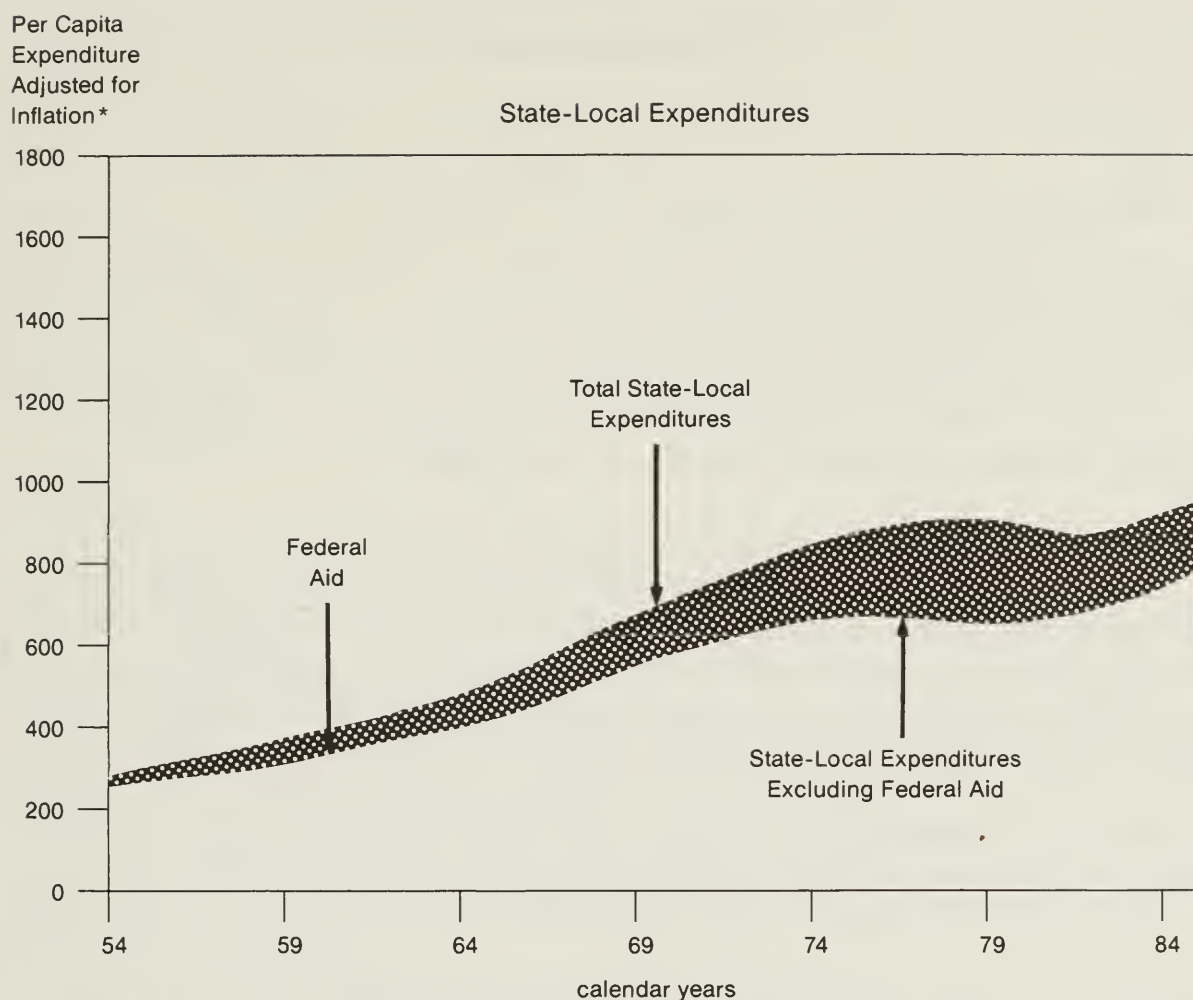
What caused the great slowdown in state-local outlays after 1978? For the first time since the end of World War II, it became much easier for most state and locally elected officials to say no rather than yes to proposals calling for expenditure increases. This newfound fiscal discipline was dictated by the three Rs: revolt of the taxpayers, reductions in federal-aid flows, and the recession.

**The Three Ds**

While state-local expenditures leveled off after the passage of Proposition 13,<sup>1</sup> federal expenditures continued their steady upward climb, rising in constant dollars from

Figure 2





\*Inflation adjustment by GNP Implicit Price Deflator, 1972 = 100

Source: ACIR computations based on U.S. Department of Commerce National Income and Product Accounts

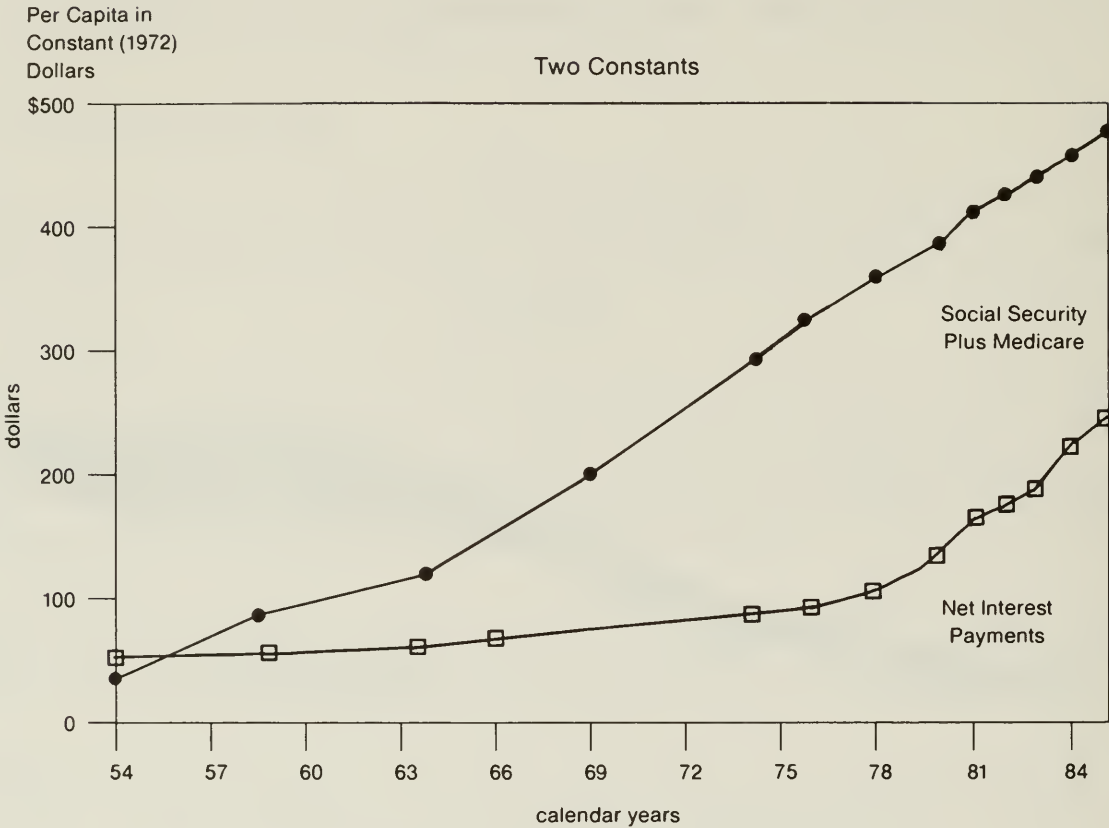
\$1,377 per capita in 1978 to \$1,700 in 1985. Figure 3 breaks down these federal expenditures into two components: constant and variable expenditures. There are two constants (shown on the top panel); one is Social Security plus Medicare, and the other is net interest payments on the federal debt. Neither constant is susceptible to rapid changes in the near future by either presidential or congressional action. The inexorable rise of expenditures for net interest payments is driven by large federal deficits and the consequent increase in the national debt, combined with continued high interest rates. The equally impressive rise in expenditures for Social Security and Medicare results from our steadily aging population, which means that each year more and more people are entitled to federal retirement benefits and insurance payments for medical care.

Variable expenditures—those which can be more readily changed by executive or congressional action—have been divided into three categories: national defense, federal aid to state and local governments, and all other federal programs. Expenditures for federal aid to state and local governments dropped sharply after 1978 and leveled off after 1981. Expenditures for all the other federal programs began a steady drop in 1981. The other variable, national defense, began to rise after 1978 and accelerated sharply after the Reagan administration took office and started to implement its promise to strengthen the nation's defenses.

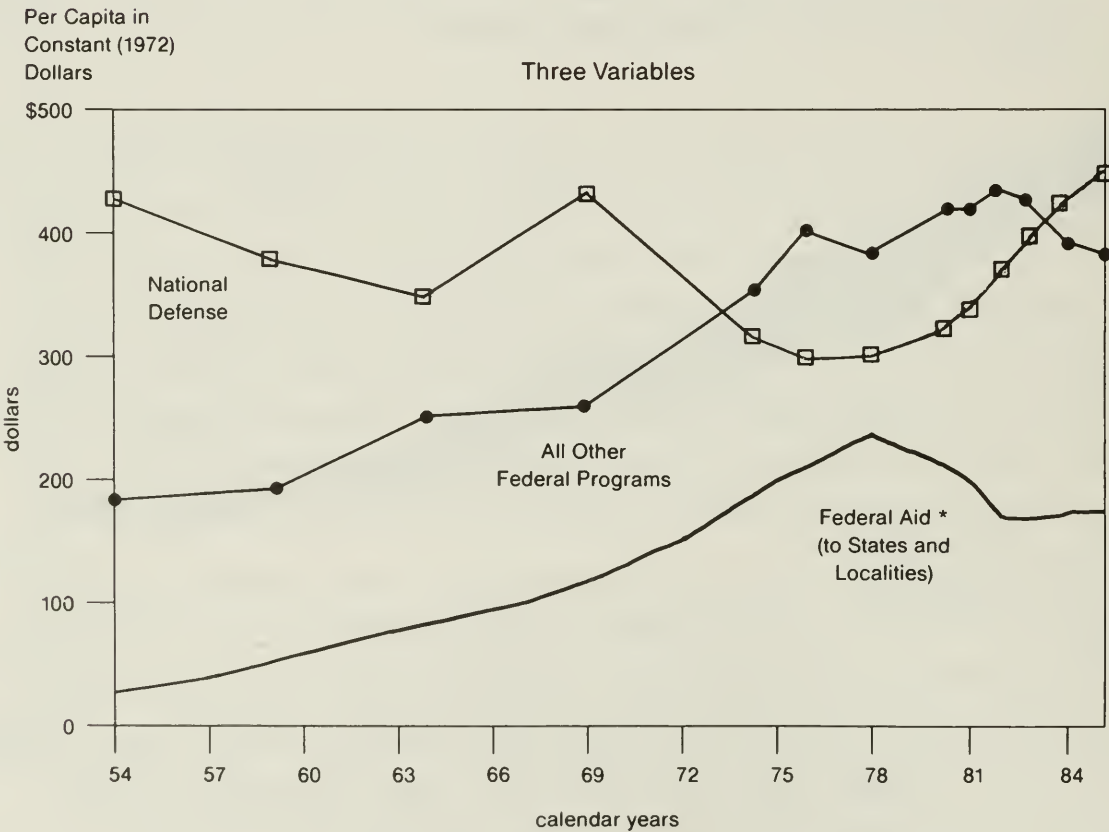
Thus, the steady advance in federal expenditures can be traced to the driving force

Figure 3

The Federal Expenditure Equation



Plus



\*Federal aid includes AFDC and Medicaid payments.  
Source: ACIR staff

of the three Ds—deficits, defense, and demographics (shorthand for Social Security and Medicare).

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### Massive Budget Deficits

There is an iron law that governs the federal budget process: nothing short of a searing crisis can generate the consensus needed for federal policymakers to take unpopular actions such as enacting major tax hikes or making cuts in programs that have strong constituencies. Absent a full-blown crisis, federal officials avoid making these hard budget choices by papering over the budget gap with deficit financing when receipts fall short of steadily rising expenditure demands. Unlike their state and local counterparts, federal officials have not been disciplined by a balanced budget mandate.<sup>2</sup>

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In a semicrisis situation, federal authorities can enact modest “revenue enhancements” and slow down the growth of programs that have relatively weak political constituencies. Many of the federal aid programs to states and localities fall into this classification. As a result, federal aid is the first major component of the budget to feel the fiscal squeeze—an early warning signal to the constituencies of more popular federal expenditure programs that there may be serious budget trouble ahead.

From a budgetary standpoint, 1985 was another very bad year for the national government. For the fiscal year ending September 30, 1985, the budget deficit totaled \$212 billion<sup>3</sup>—*an amount about equal to the total tax collections for all fifty state governments combined.*

The national government has spent more than it has raised in taxes in twenty-four of the past twenty-five years, but the size of the annual deficit has become progressively greater over the past three decades. In the late 1950s, annual federal budget deficits averaged about 3 percent of total expenditures; by the 1980s, the average had climbed to 17 percent of total federal outlays (see figure 4).

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### The Watershed Year — 1986

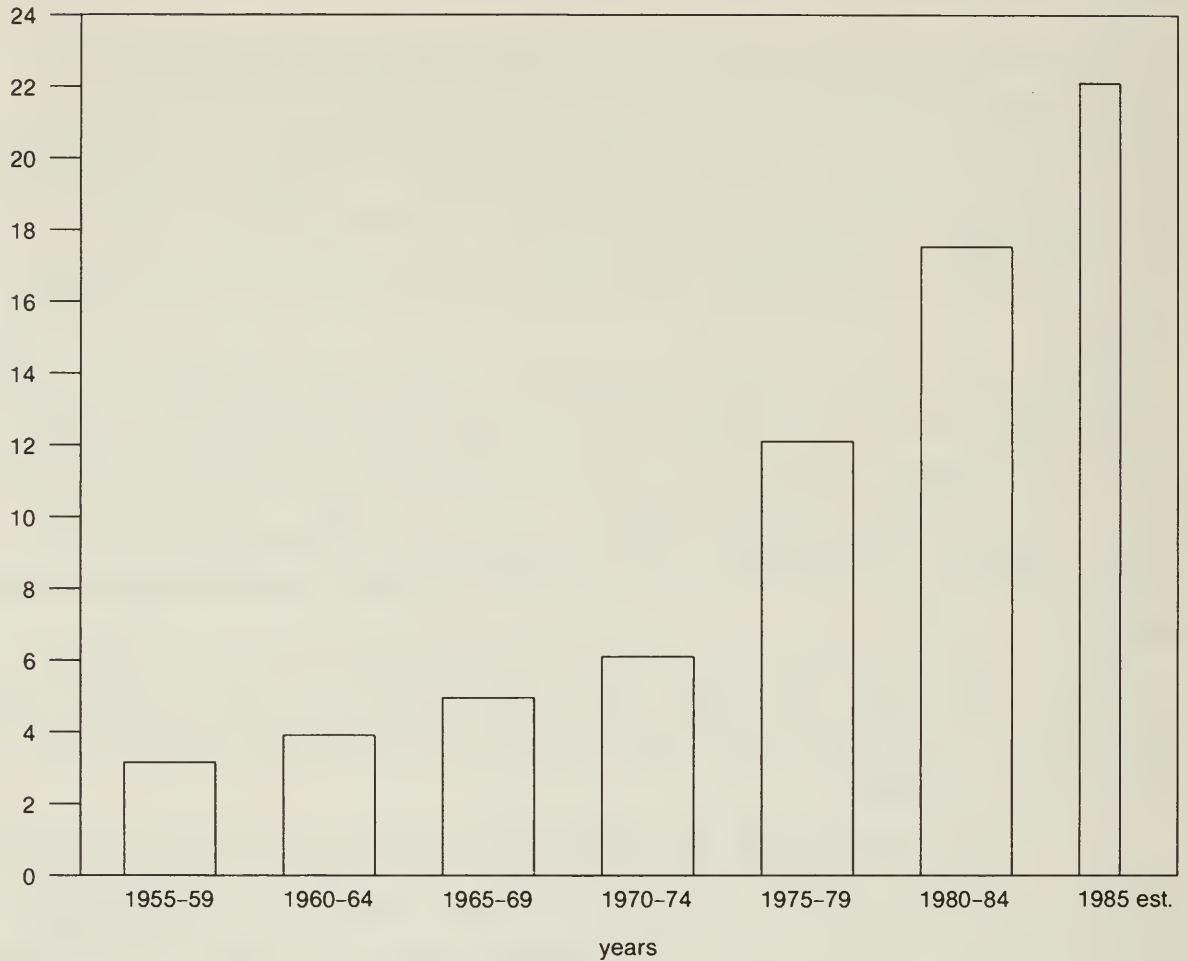
Future historians of the American federal system are likely to designate 1986 as a watershed year—the beginning of Phase II of de facto new federalism. Why? Because this long-gathering fiscal storm will probably hit Washington full force in 1986. As a result, in 1986, for the first time since the outbreak of the Korean War, we may see the trend line for federal expenditures (as measured in real per capita terms and adjusted for inflation) begin to flatten out and then remain fairly flat for the next several years. This remarkable change in Washington’s fiscal behavior is likely to be produced by the interaction of two powerful factors: the public demand to cut deficits and balance the budget, and the stout opposition of a popular president to a major federal tax increase.

The first factor—growing political demand to cut deficits—certainly proves that quantitative fiscal changes can have qualitative political effects. For years, federal budget deficits attracted remarkably little public attention; now they have reached such massive proportions that they are widely viewed as posing a clear and present danger to the nation’s economic health.

Congress will be forced to come to grips with the painful deficit issue more quickly than most Washington watchers would have predicted even a few short months ago.

Figure 4

Annual Budget Deficit as a Percentage of Federal Expenditures



1985 estimate from OMB Mid-Session Review of Budget, 20 August 1985

Source: U.S. Office of Management and Budget, *The Federal Budget for 1984*, table 24, and ACIR staff computations

Why are we surprised? Because there existed and still exists a widespread and deeply pessimistic belief that Washington is so paralyzed by special-interest politics and partisan conflicts that only a major economic depression or the imposition of a dramatic remedy—a constitutional balanced budget amendment<sup>4</sup>—could force the Congress and the White House to cut the deficit sharply. Most of us overlooked the fiscal crisis opportunity provided by the congressional need to raise its ceiling on the national debt.<sup>5</sup>

Assuming that the Reagan administration continues to block any major federal tax increase, then the road to deficit reduction and balanced budgets will be paved largely with major cuts in domestic programs (excluding Social Security), because expenditure freezes will no longer do the job.

*We will enter Phase II of de facto new federalism when the trend line for federal expenditures begins to flatten out and there are actual and substantial cuts in total federal aid flows for several years in a row.* In striking contrast, total federal aid flows to states and localities actually grew slowly during most of the years between 1978 and 1985, despite the fact that certain small programs were wiped out and many others were “frozen.”

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### Three Hard Questions

The likely prospect of real and sustained cuts in federal aid flows to states and localities poses three hard questions:

Will the poorest jurisdictions be at least partially shielded from federal budget cuts?

Will the federal aid programs that help states and localities care for poor people be declared off limits to the budget cutters?

Will states and localities be protected from new federal mandates that come without federal reimbursement?

### *Special Financial Assistance for Poor Governments*

Our federation is unique because it has not dealt directly with the poor government problem. The other major federations—Australia, Canada, and West Germany—provide special fiscal aid to those states with the most anemic revenue sources.

As illustrated by the data in table 1, the states with relatively the lowest fiscal capacity in New England (Vermont and Maine) are likely to be the hardest hit by across-the-board federal aid cuts. A persuasive case can be made for the construction of some form of a special fiscal safety net for the poorest states.<sup>6</sup>

### *Continued Federal Aid for Poor People*

The present federal aid “system” is composed of about four hundred large, medium, and small grants that cut across the entire range of the domestic public sector. In my opinion, such programs as AFDC, Medicaid, and food stamps should not be placed on the budgetary chopping block. The federal government should continue to honor its commitment to help states and localities take care of poor people. The federal government should hold to this commitment even if it means the total elimination of aid programs in areas that have lower national priority.

### *No New Mandates Without New Federal Money*

Many state and local officials fear the worst case scenario—that Congress will become even more inclined to flex its regulatory muscles and impose mandates without money now that it can no longer afford to bribe states and localities with “tied” financial grants.

In its recent *Garcia* decision,<sup>7</sup> the U.S. Supreme Court flashed the greenest of green lights to would-be federal regulators. In that close decision (5–4) the high Court told the states and localities that they could no longer hide behind judicial robes and plead the Tenth Amendment when affronted by an exercise of congressional regulatory power. In effect, the Supreme Court majority announced that it would no longer referee disputes involving state claims for immunity from congressional efforts to regulate interstate commerce. Thus, states and localities will now have to fight their own political battles in the congressional arena.

In the short run, the states and localities need (as an irreducible minimum) legislation requiring the national government to reimburse states and localities for the costs imposed by any *new* federal mandates. In the long run, our federal system may need some form of a constitutional amendment to make sure that the Supreme Court continues to play its historic role as arbiter of power conflicts between the national government and the states.

Table 1

**Federal Aid to State and Local Governments for FY84**  
 (Federal Aid Per Capita and as a Percentage of State-Local  
 General Revenue by Geographic Region with National Ranking)

State	Federal Aid (in millions)	Per Capita Federal Aid	Rank	Federal Aid as a % of State-Local Gen. Revenue	Rank	Per Capita Personal Income Calendar Year 1984	Rank
United States	\$97,052.4	\$411		17.9%		\$12,789	
New England	5,699.1	453	3	19.3		14,421	
Connecticut	1,138.0	361	36	14.9	45	16,557	3
Maine	533.6	462	17	22.6	7	10,817	38
Massachusetts	2,904.0	501	10	20.6	13	14,783	5
New Hampshire	331.3	339	41	18.5	27	13,188	16
Rhode Island	487.9	507	9	20.5	15	12,818	18
Vermont	304.2	574	5	24.9	2	10,798	40
Mideast	21,640.6	506	1	18.4		14,004	
Delaware	295.6	482	12	17.6	31	13,675	11
Dist. of Col.	1,253.8	2,013	1	42.5	1	17,108	2
Maryland	1,710.8	393	27	16.3	37	14,464	7
New Jersey	2,790.0	371	32	14.7	46	15,440	4
New York	10,937.7	617	4	18.7	23	14,318	8
Pennsylvania	4,652.7	391	29	18.5	28	12,314	27
Great Lakes	16,679.2	401	5	17.8		12,740	
Illinois	4,796.7	417	22	18.7	25	13,802	10
Indiana	1,775.7	323	47	17.2	32	11,717	32
Michigan	4,340.6	478	13	18.2	30	12,607	21
Ohio	3,745.9	348	39	16.8	35	12,355	26
Wisconsin	2,020.3	424	20	17.2	33	12,475	23
Plains	6,704.9	383	6	17.1		12,555	
Iowa	1,046.8	360	37	16.8	34	12,159	29
Kansas	802.9	329	44	15.0	44	13,249	14
Minnesota	1,928.5	463	16	15.8	40	13,246	15
Missouri	1,630.7	326	46	18.9	22	12,150	30
Nebraska	559.8	349	38	15.8	39	12,430	24
North Dakota	376.1	548	6	20.3	16	12,360	25
South Dakota	360.1	510	8	23.0	6	11,067	36
Southeast	19,779.0	355	7	19.1		11,182	
Alabama	1,540.6	386	30	20.0	17	9,992	47
Arkansas	876.8	373	31	23.1	5	9,805	48
Florida	2,938.1	268	51	14.5	47	12,763	20
Georgia	2,444.4	419	21	20.8	11	11,550	35
Kentucky	1,479.0	397	26	22.5	8	10,300	43
Louisiana	1,798.8	403	25	18.2	29	10,810	39
Mississippi	1,059.8	408	23	23.2	4	8,777	51
North Carolina	2,130.5	346	40	19.7	18	10,850	37
South Carolina	1,109.4	336	42	19.3	20	10,117	45
Tennessee	1,845.6	391	28	23.4	3	10,418	42
Virginia	1,765.6	313	48	16.0	38	13,253	13
West Virginia	790.4	405	24	21.0	9	9,729	50
Southwest	6,994.0	294	8	14.5		12,212	
Arizona	859.0	281	49	13.4	50	11,841	31
New Mexico	653.4	459	19	15.1	43	10,260	44
Oklahoma	1,092.5	331	43	16.3	36	11,655	33
Texas	4,389.1	275	50	14.2	48	12,572	22

Table 1 (cont.)

**Federal Aid to State and Local Governments for FY84**  
(Federal Aid Per Capita and as a Percentage of State-Local  
General Revenue by Geographic Region with National Ranking)

State	Federal Aid (in millions)	Per Capita Federal Aid	Rank	Federal Aid as a % of State-Local Gen. Revenue	Rank	Per Capita Personal Income Calendar Year 1984	Rank
Rocky Mountain	3,200.6	447	4	18.2		11,878	
Colorado	1,160.2	365	34	15.6	42	13,846	9
Idaho	364.0	364	35	20.6	14	10,089	46
Montana	446.7	542	7	20.9	10	10,546	41
Utah	760.0	460	18	20.6	12	9,730	49
Wyoming	469.7	919	3	18.6	26	12,235	28
Far West*	15,352.0	458	2	18.2		14,007	
California	12,171.5	475	14	18.7	24	14,488	6
Nevada	298.4	328	45	13.8	49	13,317	12
Oregon	1,268.1	474	15	19.2	21	11,613	34
Washington	1,614.0	371	33	15.7	41	12,792	19
Alaska	492.9	986	2	8.2	51	17,478	1
Hawaii	510.3	491	11	19.4	19	13,038	17

\*Excluding Alaska and Hawaii  
Source: Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 6 November 1985

**Ragged Retreat or Orderly Withdrawal?**

It is now clear that the federal government will be forced by massive and growing fiscal pressure to quicken its retreat along the entire federal aid front. It is to be hoped that the retreating feds will treat the wounded (the poor) as humanely and their allies (state and local governments) as decently as a bad fiscal situation will permit. To put the issue more directly, let us hope that the federal pullback will be conducted in a way that will minimize state and local casualties.

The federal aid issue, however, must be viewed in terms of a larger and harsher reality. While federal aid cuts can sting badly, a return to double-digit inflation followed by a severe and protracted economic recession can do far more damage to most state and local governments. To prevent a serious economic downturn, the federal government must cut deficits substantially.

Ideally, this deficit-reduction strategy will be conducted in a way that avoids placing too heavy a strain on the federal-state-local partnership. But even if it is conducted in a harsh and clumsy fashion, one thing is certain: federal deficit reduction is still in the long-range interest of every state and local government in our federation.

**Two Bright Spots**

Despite this gloomy assessment of the national government's fiscal plight, there are two bright spots: the remarkable resilience of state and local governments *and* the bracing effect of fiscal decentralization on our federal system.

The fiscal resilience of states and localities is one of the most underrated features of the American federal system. During the past eight years, the state and local sectors have been severely jolted by double-digit inflation, major recessions, the taxpayers' revolt, and a real slowdown in federal-aid flows. Yet most states and localities are now in far better financial shape than most students of public finance would have dared to predict three years ago.

The remarkable change in the expectations of state and local officials stands out as the second bright spot. They no longer look to Washington to finance their new initiatives. In short, we have entered a do-it-yourself era of fiscal federalism.

The tightening fiscal squeeze underscores an old truism: federalism is finance. Budgetary realities are inexorably forcing Washington to devolve more and more responsibility to states and localities.

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### Notes

1. In 1978, California voters approved Proposition 13, which amended the California constitution to institute a four-point program for sharply cutting back state and local taxes. It mandated that (1) as of July 1, 1978, no property could be taxed at more than 1 percent of its estimated 1975-76 market value; (2) no property tax assessment can be increased in any one year by more than 2 percent unless that property is sold, at which time it can be reassessed on the basis of its market value; (3) no local tax can be increased and no new tax imposed without the approval of two thirds of the qualified voters; and (4) no additional state taxes can be imposed unless approved by at least two thirds of the total membership of both houses of the legislature.  
California's enactment of Proposition 13 prompted similar measures limiting taxes and expenditures in many other states.
2. Congress responded to public demand to cut deficits and balance the budget by shaping and then enacting the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit control measure in December 1985. The Gramm-Rudman-Hollings proposal became PL 99-177 when it was signed by the president on December 12, 1985. This measure put both houses of Congress squarely on record in favor of reducing the deficit to zero in fiscal 1991 by forcing a series of across-the-board cuts in nonexempt programs each year if regular budget and appropriations actions fail to achieve annual goals for reducing the deficit. Only Social Security, interest on the federal budget, and a few veterans' and social programs (such as AFDC) are exempt from automatic cut provisions.
3. U.S. Office of Management and Budget, *Joint Statement of James A. Baker III, Secretary of the Treasury, and James C. Miller III, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, on Budget Results for the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 1985*, issued 25 October 1985.
4. Gramm-Rudman-Hollings is not a constitutional balanced budget amendment. It is a statutory balanced budget provision that can be altered with relative ease.
5. The architects of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings exploited this opportunity for leverage.
6. It should also be noted that Senators Dan Evans (R-Washington) and David Durenberger (R-Minnesota) proposed legislation to partially shield poor local governments from the losses they would suffer from the complete elimination of the general revenue sharing program.
7. *Garcia v. San Antonio Metropolitan Transit Authority et al.*, 105 S.Ct. 1005, 1985.

# De Facto New Federalism and New England:

## A Discussion

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*Using John Shannon's paper as a broad frame of reference (see previous article), a panel discussion titled "The Changing Nature of Federal/State Relations: The Fiscal Impact on New England" took place on 18 November 1985 at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. The discussion was sponsored by the John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs and was presented in a roundtable forum. The members of the panel were Kenneth Curtis, former governor of Maine; Chester Atkins, member of Congress from the Massachusetts Fifth Congressional District; Richard Licht, lieutenant governor of Rhode Island; David Walker, professor of political science at the University of Connecticut and former assistant director of the Government Structure and Function Section, Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations; and Roger Porter, professor of government and business at the John F. Kennedy School of Government and former special assistant to President Reagan. The following are excerpts from their remarks.*

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KENNETH CURTIS: The concept of new federalism isn't something that's been around for a short period of time. We've really been talking about it for a number of years. It's frequently had different titles and it's been promoted in different ways. For those of us who have served in state government it has had one very clear definition, which is that the federal government will authorize and support many types of governmental assistance. So-called de facto new federalism simply means that the states, the municipalities, will begin to pay a much bigger share for those particular programs.

I remember well that block grants were among the first propositions that sounded attractive to the states. And that's because the states understood what their own individual needs were far better than the federal government did. We would receive a blanket amount of money and would spread it throughout our states in the most efficient way. But the problem was that under the block grant program, we never were going to get back as much as we were getting in categorical grants.

When I was governor of Maine, governors supported very fully, and on a bipartisan basis, the concept of general revenue sharing. I think that was the first time we began to realize that governors had any power at all in this country. General revenue sharing was not especially liked by Congress. Many members of Congress much preferred the categorical grant program because they could take credit directly with the

voters for that kind of support; and governors got a little bit of relief in not having to approach the legislature quite so heavily for the taxes required to do the many things that were needed. In Maine, general revenue sharing did a tremendous amount of good, because those funds were dedicated directly to the support of public education and to a very large degree helped stabilize what was becoming a runaway escalation of property tax. So from my vantage point, that was one of the best types of new federalism we had seen, if you want to call it that.

But you know, new federalism to me has always been sold as a sugar-coated pill. It always carried a bigger burden for the states and municipalities. President Reagan, even since his days as governor of California, has been a proponent of new federalism. I think he's succeeded, certainly, but probably more in bringing about the concept of *de facto* new federalism, as John Shannon called it in the title of his paper. It's been a new *de facto* federalism simply because there are no longer enough federal dollars to go around. One of the things that concerns me is the argument put forward at times by the administration that the federal government has very large and record deficits, whereas the states are not running deficits. Of course, there's a big difference. Most states have a constitutional provision that will not allow them to run deficits and that forces balanced budgets. But we all need to remember that the federal government is still taking the lion's share of the taxing power in this country, leaving an increasingly small amount of room to maneuver at the municipal and state levels.

There's another factor that gets involved, and this is where politics rears its rather ugly head: it's the question of who wants to get blamed for raising the taxes. Certainly Congress doesn't want that distinction, and the states don't want it either. We shove it down until it hits the municipalities, where either the programs have to be cut or our own taxes have to be raised. It's a hard point to get across from any governmental level—that the great middle class are the taxpayers and it just depends on which pocket they're going to take their money from. I know during my days in Maine we believed very strongly that we should not discuss the state budget by itself, that we ought to be discussing municipal and state budgets collectively so that the taxpayers better understood what price they were going to be paying. We wanted to extract their tax dollars in the most fair, efficient, and progressive way we could, and we wanted the taxpayers to know what we were doing.

Turning very quickly to Maine and the current situation, Maine is going to face many, many severe problems, one of which is the loss of revenue sharing. Our property taxes are again getting very nearly out of control. We've had such appreciation in property values that individuals have seen their property taxes rise to an extent that is almost confiscatory. When we lose federal revenue sharing, about \$33 million a year will bounce back to municipal taxpayers, money that's been taking the form of aid to public education. Also, the municipalities are going to continue to be hit very, very heavily as aid continues to dwindle for human service programs. We don't know, of course, what the final budget's going to be, but we have many estimates which indicate that Maine will lose between 10 and 12 percent of its general fund through federal cuts. John Shannon indicated another factor that's very serious to us in Maine, which is that our state is thirty-ninth in the nation in per capita personal income. Thirty percent of the total state budget is in federal funds. And Maine is one of the states that receives a dollar for every 61 cents it sends to Washington. Whether we call it new federalism or not—I prefer to call it federal economic policies—they're hurting us in many other ways as well.

However, there is some very good news. The states are the innovative areas today in government. In fact, innovation is so lacking at the federal level that the states and municipalities are the only game in town. So we're getting a lot of talented people now at the state level, and I think they're doing a tremendous job against great odds. But the states can't act alone. My only disagreement with John Shannon is that I think it's going to get worse.

CHESTER ATKINS: I want to disagree very strongly with the gloom and doom of the previous speaker and of John Shannon.

I think what's happened is that a concept of a stronger centralized federal government—the old federalism, if you will—was established fifty years ago, and it worked. The old federalism was driven essentially by four things. The first was that the federal government had a sense that it had to be more active in the economy and in the social structure. It had the direct access to income taxation which most states didn't have. What's happened now, very clearly, is that the federal government does not have any flexibility in the taxation area, and the places where we have the greatest ability to tax, personal income and corporate income, are exactly the taxes that have the worst impact on our international competitive position. So we have a situation in which taxing authority and taxing flexibility have shifted from the federal government to the state governments. The tax revolt started with Proposition 13 in California, but the states are now resisting that. You're not seeing new measures to limit the taxing authority of state and local governments. When such measures are put on the ballot, they're defeated.

The second thing that drove the old federalism was civil rights. Because the South, in particular, was so segregated fifty years ago, it was important for resources to be directed by the federal government, and this became increasingly important in the sixties simply to ensure that minorities had equal access to these programs. Now the only attorney general in the United States and its territories who is less aggressive than Attorney General Meese is in Guam, and that's because they have no civil rights problems there since everyone is of the same ethnic origin, except for the tourists. All the states that made up the Solid South are the very states with laws on the books that are more aggressive than the federal government. Not just their practices or their attorneys general, but the state laws themselves.

The third concept behind the old federalism was that the federal government could create an equalization of resources between rich states and poor states. There were massive disparities in median income, particularly in the Deep South and the industrial Northeast. But today, most of the economic disparity occurs *within* states. It's hard to think of a state in the country that's an economic basket case—there isn't one. But there are regions within very wealthy states that are extremely poor.

And finally, since it was more activist than the states, only the federal government had the civil service traditions and the administrative capacity to run domestic programs. Well, that's no longer the case. There isn't a state in the country that doesn't have more of a capacity to run them than the federal government, which virtually has declared war on all of these programs. People on the federal level who are running the programs are the same people who want to abolish them. That's their stated objective.

So the question really is, how do we get beyond the paralysis that we are in? I think the first thing we do is give up and stop clinging to our notion of the old feder-

alism. Second, we recognize that state and local governments are a tremendous success story. They have built the administrative capacity, the commitment in terms of social justice and economic opportunity, and they've left the federal government in the dust, frankly, particularly under the present administration. The thing that's shackling their ability to meet the unmet needs in their jurisdictions is twofold. One is federal regulation. Many of the regulations that we put on the books to protect essentially poor people and localities are now inhibiting any kind of innovation for meeting new problems. AFDC is a case in point. The federal laws and the federal regulations on AFDC simply serve to keep people in poverty. We should look at some of the federal mandates that are restricting flexibility and creativity on the part of state and local governments. We do have to be very sure that we maintain the protections that people have had historically, and that we maintain civil rights protection. State and local governments—all fifty of them—aren't always going to be more progressive than the federal government. They certainly will continue to be more flexible and more capable of meeting changing situations.

I think we also need to take a look at some of those federal domestic expenditures that are administered and coordinated better on the state level. For instance, the interstate highway system—we've already built it. Other than basically maintaining certain uniform national traffic safety features, which, frankly, it does very poorly now, the federal government ought to get out of that business entirely and return all the gas tax to the states. Then the states could meet their real transportation priorities. The huge federal highway administration bureaucracy could be eliminated, and the federal government would stop forcing on states crazy projects that they would never build with their own money but do build because they can do it with a ten-cent dollar—money they don't get unless they build the particular project the Federal Highway Administration and Congress want.

I could go on and on, but the key is that we ought to cut the states loose from their federal shackles—from some of them, anyway—and allow them to be more creative. We ought to give them revenue sources for things that are best done on the state level; and we ought to ensure that there's a national policy for income support for everyone—that the federal government indeed provides some kind of social safety net, especially in nutrition and income maintenance. We should ensure that there are uniform federal standards for that, which, by the way, do not currently exist. We should make certain that environmental standards are met. If we allow the states to continue to evolve as they have been evolving in the past fifty years, I think we'll see a flowering of the kinds of programs and the kinds of innovation that anybody who believes in an activist government would like to see. At the same time we'll see civil rights protected, and environmental concerns protected, and we'll be able at the federal level to cope with the deficit.

Frankly, the most destructive thing contributing to the present paralysis is that the Democrats are clutching onto the teeny piece of the federal government that constitutes domestic programs, and in return for that, on the deals we make on the budget resolution, we allow for huge increases in defense expenditures. And if we didn't have to bargain in this way, we could force the cuts we need in defense expenditures. This would give us the credibility we need to increase federal revenues to deal with the deficit and allow the states to do the kinds of things they do so well with the domestic programs.

RICHARD LICHT: The debate on this subject reminds me of the story of the man who was drowning in the Potomac River about fifty feet from shore while on the sidelines were standing two congressmen. One was a Democrat and the other was a Republican. And both of them were conscientious public servants and wanted to help this drowning man. The Republican had a life preserver with a twenty-five-foot-long rope and threw it out, saying, "I want to help this man, but I believe if he's going to be saved he also has to try to help himself." The Democrat took a life preserver with a hundred feet of rope and threw it far out over the drowning man's head and said, "I also want to help this man, but I have to run off now to do another good deed." I think that what's happening in Washington is that no one wants to address the problem of the drowning man. I think they're using a misnomer, or perhaps even a euphemism, when they talk about the new federalism. It's really just an abdication by the federal government of any responsibility whatsoever for fashioning any solution to today's social problems that we around the country are dealing with on a day-to-day basis. The reality is that we have to deal with that situation.

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We've talked a lot about the budget, but there's a second issue that has to be discussed in terms of its effect on the states, and that's tax reform. I don't know whether we will or we won't have tax reform, but they talk about it. And the elimination of the state and local tax deduction, which everyone assures me won't happen, is still out there on the table. If that happens, it will have a very grave impact on the economic development plans of a number of states. I know it will in Rhode Island and Massachusetts and many other Northeastern states. But speaking of tax reform, very few people are talking about the changes in tax-exempt bond financing and what these changes are going to do. If passed in Treasury 2, they're going to eliminate many of the tax-exempt financing plans that have been used in the states for years, including water treatment plants, plans for solid waste disposal, and health and education plans in our hospitals and schools, both public and private. Those institutions will be forced to raise money or borrow money at much higher interest rates, which will have an impact both on state and local governments.

The other point that concerns me a great deal and that no one wants to talk about is the process that goes on in Washington with regard to passing budget bills. We're now two months into the current budget season and only one of the thirteen appropriation bills has even been passed in Congress. The budget resolution really doesn't necessarily mean anything until they pass the appropriation bills. We at the state and local levels are trying to plan our budgets in advance in a timely, sensible manner, and we have no idea what the federal government will or won't cut this year or even in future years. This uncertainty about the budget is plaguing state and local governments, and Congress just doesn't want to pay a lot of attention to the problem. I wish they'd at least make their decisions so we could plan properly and be as resilient as the prior speakers say we are.

Another concern I have is with regard to what Congress is going to do after it gets out of dispensing money. Since there'll be no more money to dispense, is Congress then going to get into traditional state functions and start passing all sorts of laws telling us how to run our state governments and our state societies? That is a fear I have, being a former legislator. It's nice to go back to your constituents and say you got some legislation passed. Congressmen and senators could come back and say, I got this federal money for you and that federal money for you. Well, they're not going to

be able to say that much anymore, so are they going to come back and start regulating in all sorts of areas? Areas that were traditional state functions—consumer protection, insurance industries—will now become the domain of congressmen who need to run for reelection. They're in the banking area already.

Another issue I'd like to raise is the question of what really is being cut when you talk about the budget cuts. I agree with John Shannon that we should protect the most indigent people we have in this country and continue the programs we have for them. The problem is that the only federal programs this leaves to cut are those which have benefited the middle class. Since that's where the bulk of the votes are, cuts in these programs are going to create problems for state government. Also, a lot of those programs are urban mass transportation programs, which benefit people in the entire economic spectrum. Economic development programs such as UDAGs (Urban Development Action Grants) and Community Economic Development Grants are all going to go by the wayside, undoubtedly, and they have been very helpful to the states in promoting economic development and helping to bring about some of the good times we've had over the past several years.

I want to close by reiterating a point that's been made about the states being laboratories. That's not a new concept. It was Justice Brandeis who first used the term, many years ago. At that time the states were enacting imaginative labor laws, like the prohibition of child labor, and they frequently came to the Supreme Court for decision. In Rhode Island, we've led the nation in deinstitutionalization of both the mentally retarded and the mentally ill. I visited a program in Newport for mentally ill people who were no longer institutionalized. They were living in community homes, and the people who ran the program were trying to get them jobs and were succeeding, especially in the tourist industry. The problem, however, was getting the people to be willing to work, because if they did go to work, their entire support structure was pulled out from under them. They lost their SSI, their Social Security, their food stamps, their housing assistance, and everything else. And if they went to the job and just didn't make it, they couldn't go back on SSI, because you have to show that you're totally incapacitated in order to collect SSI. And if you held a job, even if it was only for a couple of weeks, the assumption is made that you're able to get a job and can get another one. So these people were fearful of going out into the community. Again, it was the federal regulations that were preventing what was not just an innovative state program but really an innovative private program from working.

So these are some of my thoughts. We who are on the firing line in the states are ready to assume the burden, but we need to be given some indication of which way we're going. Then we'll have to handle it for better or worse.

DAVID WALKER: What I'm going to say will differ somewhat from what the previous speakers said. I think many of the trends that have been discussed here are still in some stage of murkiness, if not total ambivalence. The overriding theme at the moment would appear to be the fiscal one, [but] one has also to look at where this fits into the overall system. I use three factors at the present time to gauge things. One's the operational, of which fiscal matters—grants and aid, programs, inter-governmental administration—are all a part. The second, given the extraordinary activism of this presumably conservative Court, is the constitutional, legal, and congressional tendency to preempt. The third factor is the political/representational, the skill and the ability of state and local governments and their elected officials to effec-

tively represent their positions in Washington, compared to what they could have done twenty-five years ago.

Starting with the operational and looking at the fiscal component of that, there's no way to deny the receding of the high level of federal aid as a proportion of state and local revenue—as John Shannon highlighted all too well—compared to almost any point in the recent past, back to 1978, which was the high-water mark. At the same time, when you reach 23 percent, which we did as of 1983–84, you're no farther back than we were in the middle Nixon years in terms of federal aid as a proportion of total state and local revenues—which is to say we're not back to Johnson, and we're nowhere near Herbert Hoover. Deficits, I think, are the overriding politics in Washington at the present time, but despite that, if the scenario that was forecast in the fall of 1981 had been played out, the present figure for federal aid, for fiscal '85, would have been in the area of \$61 billion, rather than \$107 billion, as it was. To put it differently, in '82, '83, and '84, the Congress presented the president with a series of appropriation bills on the order of \$7, \$8, and \$9 billion greater than what he asked for, and he signed all of them. This year may be different, but the previous three years would indicate that there's a capacity even in a period of retrenchment, even in a period of deficit politics, to achieve a certain very slow increase—some would say it was static in terms of constant dollars—but it was about a 5 percent real dollar increase in fiscal '85 over '84.

If one looks at the programmatic dimension of the operational factor—namely, the programs themselves—there's been no repeal of any of the Johnson major programs throughout the entire period. None of them have been repealed. We've had a merger of some seventy-seven-odd, rather pitifully small categorical and two block grants into nine block grants. We had the elimination of some sixty-odd categorical programs, largely in education and somewhat in economic development in the multistate area. But there has been no major abandonment. In fact, the figures for Medicaid, AFDC, and food stamps are all greater now, in terms of total dollar volume, than they were in 1981 or in the last year of Carter. So that must be kept in mind to get some perspective on this. Paradoxically, we've got thirteen block grants now, as against the old five that we had as of 1980. Thirteen, plus general revenue sharing, and the total of that amount comes to something like 18 percent of federal aid at the moment. As of '83 and '84 the total proportion of federal aid bypassing state government and going directly to cities and counties still aggregated 22 percent, the same figure as in the last year of Mr. Carter. Now, I'm not undermining in any way the thesis that there's obviously been a slowdown in the growth of aid. But to picture a total devolution from the figures that have been presented misses the mark, I think, significantly.

The second area is the legal, the constitutional/regulatory. And if one analyzes the input from the high Court and Congress and the administration in this area, one knows, I think, that the state and local people are in a far poorer, far weaker position than they were a decade or even five years ago. There's been no modification in the entire position in the high Court since 1923. The constitutional context is one in which the role of the federal government to allocate resources is preeminent. This power is reflected in *Massachusetts v. Mellon*,<sup>1</sup> which is still the law of the land and which says that Congress can append any conditions it wants to a grant made. The Supreme Court, in last year's *Garcia* decision,<sup>2</sup> affirmed the power of the federal government to determine local aid.

This leads me to the third factor—the political/representational factor. In the *Garcia* case, the majority on the Court held that the states and municipalities, through the use of their lobbying powers, were amply protected by the existing political processes to get what they needed. As far as the high Court is concerned, the capacity of cities and counties and states and school districts to lobby in Washington—in short, the strength of the representational components of federalism to be within the very bowels of the national government—and the fact that they can get grants from the national government, is all evidence that the states and localities are amply protected within the political processes of our national system. In fact, all the public interest groups, the governors and the legislators, the mayors, the county officials, and the school districts—and perhaps New England generally—they all are very well organized. And, I would add, they had better be, because the array of interests that are now in Washington has multiplied by a factor of at least six. And neither the economic nor the social nor the business lobbies are particularly sensitive to the interests of state and local government. The outcome of decisions in Washington, I would argue, at the present time, is in large measure a product of the interest-group-laden process that constitutes our national policy process. As a result, even though they are well organized, states and localities are at more of a disadvantage than they've ever been in the political/representational area.

So the picture is this. The states are weaker in the political/representational area and in the constitutional/regulatory area, but in an operational sense they're more or less holding their own. This only reiterates what John Shannon and others have said. The extraordinary capacity of this particular period, combined with the very difficult circumstances of states and localities generally, indicates a resourcefulness and a resilience to countermand and in some respects to thwart the efforts of Washington in the past four or five years. The capacity of certain state legislatures and governors to join in complementing, supplementing, and making up for certain kinds of cuts—a trend that started back in 1981—indicates a kind of strength that a lot of us—not including myself—felt was not there.

So the picture is mixed. The political processes in this country haven't changed very much. The only thing that's changed in a significant degree is the deficit question. And there is an attitude among state and local people that you can't go to Washington to solve all your problems. I think they knew that even in terms of middle to late Carter. But beyond that, the constitutional issue—and *Garcia* above all else, I would say—puts the localities in a new position vis-à-vis the high Court of the country and the orbit of the United States Constitution.

ROGER PORTER: It's a great experience for me to sit in the presence of a former professor of mine—Sam Beer—who has forgotten more about federalism than I ever learned.

I don't come full of answers to what seems to be the central preoccupation of our discussion today—the federal budget. I'm reminded of the story of the lion who was walking down the jungle path, asking each of the animals in turn, "Who is the king of the jungle?" And the animals responded very deferentially, "Why, you are, sir." Finally the lion came to the elephant, and he asked, "Who is the king of the jungle?" And the elephant responded by picking up the lion in his trunk, whirling him around his head, and dashing him against a tree. Whereupon the lion got up, deeply hurt and bedraggled, and said, after he had slinked a safe distance down the jungle path, "Well,

you didn't have to get mad just 'cause you didn't know the answer."

But let me remind you of a couple of dimensions of the problem that we face, because I am convinced it is the most urgent problem on our platter and the one most relevant to our discussion. In the year 1980, the federal budget, as measured by outlays, increased at an annual rate of 17 percent. This was the most dramatic rate of increase that we have ever had at any time in our nation's fiscal history. And it was characteristic of a pattern that had continued for a decade, with the federal government assuming more and more responsibility and growing larger and larger. Federal revenues, which were increasing dramatically, were being driven by two factors. First, bracket creep, which we had always had with the progressive income tax—the kind of bracket creep off the personal income tax which generated 1.6 dollars in federal revenues for every dollar growth in nominal GNP. During 1979 and 1980 we had, for the first time in our nation's history, back-to-back years of double-digit inflation. The Consumer Price Index from January 1979 to December 1980—in that twenty-four-month period—increased by more than 25 percent. Coupled with that were already legislated Social Security tax increases, which were going to push federal revenues as a share of our gross national product to close to 23 percent. This compared with the average federal take of 19 percent of GNP in terms of revenues for the decades of the sixties and the seventies. The great debate in Washington at that time was not about whether we would have a tax cut—both parties were committed to it, as was the Congress—but about what the size of the cut would be. We had what someone once described as an overshooting of the mark in 1981, where a proposal advanced by an administration interested in reducing federal revenues was Christmas-treed by a Congress anxious to get in on the act, and we took federal revenues down in one fell swoop to 17 percent of GNP. In the past four years we have had four federal tax increases, which have brought federal revenues today as a share of GNP to the exact level that they averaged during the sixties and seventies, that is, 19.0 percent of GNP.

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Now let's look at what happened on the spending side of the budget. During the sixties and the seventies, two important phenomena occurred with respect to the federal budget. The first is that we cut in half our share of GNP devoted to defense. During the early 1960s, in the Kennedy administration, we were devoting half of the federal budget and 9.9 or roughly 10 percent of our GNP to defense expenditures. During those two decades we took federal defense spending, as a share of the federal budget, to below 25 percent, and we took it as a share of GNP down to 5.1 percent. The second dramatic thing that happened during those decades with respect to the federal budget is that we had a veritable explosion of federal spending on entitlement programs, largely with respect to income transfer payments to individuals for Social Security, disability, Medicare, and so forth, and an explosion in federal domestic spending, in which the budget more than doubled. Today we have replaced that set of budget priorities in the federal government with a reordering toward defense and a reduction in federal domestic discretionary spending; and we have plateaued entitlements at a much higher level.

So the picture looks something like this. Two growing parts of the federal budget: first, defense, which has gone from 5.1 percent of GNP up to 6.6. We're not back to 10, we're not even halfway back there, but we're up to 6.6, so we've added about 1.5 percent of GNP to defense spending. Second, the biggest growth by far in the federal budget is nonprogrammatic. It's federal—net federal interest on the debt. That has gone from \$49 billion a year in absolute terms in 1980 to \$130 billion today, repre-

senting over 13 percent of the federal budget. In 1965, net federal interest payments were 1.3 percent of GNP. In 1975 they were 1.7 percent, and today, as the fastest growing part of the federal budget, they're 3.4 percent of GNP and rising. So between defense, where we've added 1.5 percent of GNP, and interest payments on the debt, where we've added almost 2 percent of GNP, with a plateau of federal entitlement spending at 38 percent of the federal budget—about 9.5 percent of GNP—we've had a big cut in federal domestic discretionary spending.

We can't do anything about net interest in the short term; that's 3.4 percent. If you don't allow for any more growth in defense and you leave it at 6.6 percent, the two of those add up to 10 percent of GNP. And unless you're prepared to go in and whack away at entitlements—this is AFDC, food stamps (more than we have already), Social Security, disability, Medicare, and you assume that you can contain Medicare where it is—you've added another 9.5 percent of GNP. If the federal government did nothing else—just paid the interest on the debt, kept defense at current levels, and federal entitlement program spending—you're at 19.5 percent of GNP without anything else. Now the situation in fact is that we're spending 24.8 percent of GNP and we're taking in 19. That means we're currently running deficits today for fiscal '85 of 5.8 percent of GNP. At the same time, we have states that have shown the resilience John Shannon talked about—states that have made the difficult decisions, that have put their fiscal houses in remarkable order. It is truly amazing to see what many states have done in view of the fiscal situation they have faced. We now have states in the aggregate running a surplus of something like \$34 to \$40 billion. Others here know the figures much more precisely than I do. But it is truly remarkable what has happened.

Now I want to leave with you two thoughts, in addition to my simple conviction that there is no more food at the federal trough, only deficits. I think it's mind-boggling if you step back for a minute and think of the federal government having persisted with general revenue sharing as long as it has when it is running budget deficits on the order of \$200 billion a year, sharing money with entities which in the aggregate are running surpluses. But putting that aside, the two thoughts are as follows. The first one has been alluded to by other speakers. There is an almost instinctive reaction on the part of policymakers, when you are pulling out or cutting spending programs, to try to accomplish the same objectives through other means, and the principal alternative means is through mandating or regulating the activity. The explosion in federal regulation that has occurred over the past ten years is in part the result of various attempts to cope with this budget situation. This was not the first administration to discover that federal spending was racing ahead at rates and levels that were unsustainable. And I think this accounts to a great extent for the direction that the Congress and the executive branch and the courts have moved in—as we have heard discussed today—that is, into spending more and more time and devoting more and more effort to telling states what to do. I view that as an unfortunate development. We have in the White House an individual who spent eight years of his life running a state government, who believes very strongly in the capacities of state governments, and who, while he is able to devote only a fraction of his time to such matters, has—in the instances where I have been present—constantly urged federal officials to adopt measures that would be less intrusive in terms of telling states what to do. I think the appointment of Otis Bowen, the former governor of Indiana, as

secretary of health and human services, resulted largely from the president's realization that this is one of the federal agencies that does the most in the way of regulating the states, and he wants someone in there who's sympathetic to his belief that the federal government ought to be playing a less intrusive role. The second and last thought I would like to share with you is that I am convinced, as is David Walker and, I guess, all of the previous speakers, that individuals and institutions more frequently than not underestimate their capacity to make adjustments and change. The reason for this phenomenon, which we see in our personal lives as well as in the institutions with which we are associated, is that most change and adjustment is inconvenient, and often difficult. And therefore we tend to resist it, especially if we believe there is an alternative. Our forum today suggests that there is now no alternative but to bring the federal fiscal crisis—papered over for the past few years by a tremendous inflow of foreign capital from abroad—to an end, and that people recognize this. And we will not bring this about without a good deal of change and adjustment and some sacrifice. On that happy note, I'm delighted to conclude my remarks.

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#### Notes

1. *Massachusetts v. Mellon*, 262 U.S. 447, 1923.
2. For an explanation of the *Garcia* decision, see p. 33 of the previous article, "De Facto New Federalism: Phase II?" by John Shannon.

## Rhode Island:

## The Defeat of the Greenhouse Compact

*Ira Magaziner*

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*Rhode Island has not shared equally in New England's economic resurgence of recent years. A major reevaluation of the state's economic malaise in 1982-84 resulted in a \$250 million program called the Greenhouse Compact to improve business in the state. Initially supported in polls by a two-to-one margin, the Compact was defeated overwhelmingly when it went to a statewide referendum. The timing of the referendum and mistakes in the public relations strategy and in the structure of the Compact all played a role in the outcome, but postelection polls showed that defeat, based on a massive shift of undecided voters, ultimately revolved around a lack of trust in government and in the state's leadership. Rhode Islanders made an understandable choice which unfortunately led to the loss of a great opportunity for the state.*

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In recent years, New England has acquired a reputation as the glamorous new high technology alternative to the Sun Belt. Massachusetts and Connecticut, in particular, have seen an influx of businesses, jobs, and young, upwardly mobile executives pursuing fast-lane careers.

Not so Rhode Island. Rather, the state has stagnated over the past decade, barely replacing jobs lost in its aging manufacturing base. And the jobs that remain make Rhode Island manufacturing wages the third lowest in the nation. Also, owing to the lack of attractive employment opportunities for its young people, Rhode Island has the third highest proportion of people over age sixty-five of any state in the country; its educated youth are leaving for greener pastures.

Thus, as a Rhode Islander and a father, I embraced the opportunity in 1982 to volunteer my time as a consultant to a special commission created for the purpose of recommending ways to end Rhode Island's economic malaise. My job was to coordinate the research and writing of the commission's report.

The Rhode Island Strategic Development Commission (SDC) was composed of nineteen members, with an advisory committee of another fifty members. The participants were drawn from business, finance, organized labor, higher education, public service, and environmental advocacy. In addition, there was a staff of seventy people who did the research and writing of the draft report (this group was formed and directed by me). With the help of the advisory committee, the commission amended the draft and came up with a document that met with their satisfaction.

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While this document was being written, pieces of it were circulated for assessment among people who had expertise in the various topics—such as taxation, environmental issues, and so on—that it evaluated. Approximately one hundred reviewers took part in this phase of the process. The final draft was composed by the seventy-person staff and the commission. All of this occurred between October 1982 and October 1983. At the end of those twelve months, the report, known as the Greenhouse Compact, was introduced to the public. It was one thousand pages long and contained a thorough analysis of the state's economy, along with a series of seventy recommendations.<sup>1</sup> All the participants in the process that led to the final report either volunteered their own time—or, as was the case with consultants, researchers, and secretaries from my company, Telesis—had their time volunteered for them by their employers.

Just as no two businesses are exactly alike, no two states are exactly the same in their economic problems. The substance of the program developed not from any ideology but from a pragmatic consideration of what would be required to make a significant difference in the Rhode Island economy in the coming decade. In a state not known for harmonious relations among business, government, and labor, the achievement of a broad consensus among commission members on such a sweeping program was viewed as a significant milestone.

Between October 1983 and March 1984, the report won endorsement from over fifty leadership groups, including the state's Chambers of Commerce and its AFL-CIO; the League of Cities and Towns (composed of mayors and town administrators); the presidents of all the universities and colleges in the state, as well as all the college student councils; the Hospital Association of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island State Nurses' Association; the Black Ministers Alliance; the Gray Panthers; the Vietnam Era Veterans Association; and others.

In April 1984, the Greenhouse Compact passed both houses of the state legislature by substantial margins—81 to 7 in the House of Representatives and 36 to 13 in the Senate. (In Rhode Island, legislation must pass in both the state Senate and House before being brought to the public in the form of a referendum.) The program won bipartisan support from most political leaders in the state, including the Republican and Democratic candidates for governor and the state's Republican and Democratic U.S. senators. The commission then took the Compact to an all-or-nothing binding referendum. The referendum wasn't essential for enactment of the program, since the state treasury had a surplus that could have financed all of it; but it was important, the commissioners felt, to engage Rhode Islanders in the process. Between mid October 1983 and mid June 1984, commissioners volunteered their time to talk and debate with voters in almost eight hundred meetings held around the state. Polls were taken regularly to gauge public opinion, and up to the last three weeks before the vote, they consistently gave the program a two-to-one favorable margin.

On June 12, 1984, Rhode Islanders went to the polls. The program was slaughtered.

The defeat of the Greenhouse Compact was an enormous disappointment to all of us who had given two years of our time to the commission, but it didn't come as a complete surprise. Events of the month prior to the referendum played a disproportionate role in the final determination. This article explains the Compact's defeat; but before going into that, I will give a brief description of the program's substance.

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### The Greenhouse Compact

After studying Rhode Island's economic status in depth, the individuals on the SDC agreed that a major financial investment would be required to redress the cumulative problems that had contributed to Rhode Island's stagnation. They found that over 60 percent of the state's manufacturing businesses were seriously threatened by foreign competition; it was clear that Rhode Island needed new products and new businesses.

The trend, however, was in the opposite direction. Rhode Island entrepreneurs were starting businesses in other states, and the substantial venture capital firms located in Rhode Island were lending out of state. State-based firms that *were* expanding were creating more jobs outside Rhode Island than at home. Finally, important research in several fields was being conducted in universities and hospitals around the state, but Rhode Island businesses were not making use of it. In order to reverse this pattern, the commission worked out a program of incentives to encourage the development of new products and industries; to create an infrastructure for the development of new products and industries; and to improve the general business climate.

Of the seventy recommendations that were made, some of the more significant ones were as follows: (1) the creation of research "greenhouses" to conduct applied research in areas where Rhode Island universities and hospitals were already strong. These would serve as a magnet for internal companies already working in those areas and would stimulate the creation of new companies in the state; (2) an incentive program to foster expansion of firms within the state; (3) a program to encourage Rhode Island firms to share the risk of associated investments in order to pioneer new products and markets; (4) elimination of all capital gains taxes on profits received from new business start-ups; and (5) the granting of offsets against the state personal income tax for entrepreneurs and investors. With respect to the general business climate, the commission advised reform of the state unemployment and workers compensation systems to reduce costs; establishment of a state office to cut red tape in business regulation; and significant education and training programs to upgrade the skills of the Rhode Island population.

The Greenhouse Compact called for an investment of \$250 million over seven years—\$160 million in direct financing and the rest in tax cuts and loans for businesses. The goal was to stimulate a total investment of \$750 million over the seven-year duration of the program. The Compact was to be administered by an independent body consisting of nineteen members from the private sector and two representatives from the legislature. The structure of this second commission would parallel that of the original one, although the appointments made to it would be on a rotating basis, with the term of service lasting one, two, or three years (a provision was included for the reappointment of members). A paid staff would be hired about two months after a positive referendum vote, and the new commission would contribute a significant effort in the first year and a half of its existence. But the new commission would survive only as long as the program was in operation; it would act as a board of directors and a catalyst for development, not as another permanent layer of bureaucracy.

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## The Will of the Voters — An Overview

Two polls were taken by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., of Washington, D.C., to register voter attitudes toward the Compact. In December 1983, when asked how they would cast their ballot if the election were held that day, Rhode Islanders indicated they would vote for the program by just under a two-to-one margin. In mid March 1984, another Hart poll indicated a favorable vote by slightly more than a two-to-one margin. (These majorities included pollees who said they would *probably* vote for the Compact as well as those who expressed a definite intention to do so. Ultimately, the fate of the program was in the hands of the “probables” and those who were undecided.) In early June, however, a poll by Alpha Research Associates, Inc., of Providence showed a negative result of 42 percent against the program, 34 percent in favor of it; but even those figures did not foreshadow the ultimate margin of defeat.

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Voting behavior is always complex and rarely lends itself to easy analysis. Two major postelection polls—one by a team from Providence College and the other by Alpha Research Associates for a Brown University study team—were conducted to assess the results of the referendum. The thousands of phone calls made by Greenhouse supporters in the weeks preceding the election also provided some insight into shifting voter dispositions. Finally, in seeking a deeper understanding than polls or phone calls can provide, I have talked with many people, both supporters and opponents of the Compact, since the election.

From very early on, two distinct voter groups emerged: one of hard-core supporters, the other of hard-core opponents. In the December 1983 poll, 16 percent of respondents said they definitely planned to vote yes; 12 percent registered a definite intention to vote no. Supporters of the program included people who were close to the Greenhouse process; people who were close to people who were close to the process; and others whose imagination had been captured by the possibility of actually effecting a significant improvement in the state economy. On the other side were the opponents. The Compact was a public program created to provide incentives for industrial development, and those whose ideologies were in conflict with this type of agenda were set in their intention to vote against it. This included a group on the right of the political spectrum who opposed government intervention in the economy, as well as a group on the left who opposed a so-called welfare program for business. The former felt that labor had made inadequate concessions in the Compact; the latter felt that labor had conceded too much. The hard-core opposition also included people who after years of disenchantment had finally become alienated from government in the state, along with people who were fed up with taxes and saw the Compact as another tax program. Additionally, there was a small group of businessmen who did not wish to see wages rise in the state (though of course their opposition was never explicitly stated in these terms).

The figures for these two crystallized groups remained relatively stable, increasing by only a few percentage points, to 21 percent in favor and 18 percent opposed, by mid March 1984. Though they were responsible for much of the noise on both sides of the debate and received most of the coverage by the news media, the program's

vocal and confirmed proponents and opponents had little to do with the actual outcome of the election. The most important group in this regard was the "silent majority," which represented 72 percent of voters in December 1983 and 61 percent in March 1984. In December, 33 percent of this group listed themselves as probable yes voters, 13 percent as probable no voters, and 26 percent as undecided. By March, the figures had tilted even more in favor of the program: 39 percent were probable yes voters, 12 percent were probable no voters, and 10 percent were undecided. Yet in the end, virtually all of these people voted no.

Throughout the year, the attitude of these swing voters toward the Compact had been both positive and negative. Until May, the positive outweighed the negative for the most part. By early June, the negative won out.

The prevailing view of the Compact disposed a majority of the swing group toward a positive ballot. Conveyed in the polls and in conversations during the statewide meetings, it can be summarized as follows: "The state has economic problems and some new effort is required to remedy the situation. These Greenhouse people and the governor seem to have put a lot of work into this program, and they appear to be intelligent and honest. Maybe it will work; let's give it a shot." But the seed of defeat for the Compact had been planted long before its initiation, then harvested over many seasons of disappointment and disillusionment. Despite their inclination to vote for the program, the swing group expressed a number of concerns, the substance of which follows, that severely undermined their positive feelings: "This program involves spending a lot of money and it's awfully complicated. In Rhode Island, you can't trust that a program like this won't become politicized and result in the powerful giving out money to their friends and creating patronage jobs, or, worse, stealing the people's money." In early polls, 65 percent of *all* voters said they agreed with the statement that "there is too much political corruption in Rhode Island for a program like the Greenhouse to be administered honestly and effectively."

### The Three Debates

The controversy over the Greenhouse Compact occurred on three levels, and the postmortems that took place varied according to the perspective of the participant.

On the most superficial level, the debate centered on ideology, pitting advocates of industrial policy or government intervention in the economy against supporters of laissez-faire economics policies. Many reports in the national media posed the issues within this framework; some academics interested in the national aspects of the debate did likewise, as did some opponents of the Compact within Rhode Island. The presentation of the debate in the national media was probably further influenced by my presence as a consultant to the Greenhouse and my coauthorship with Robert Reich of *Minding America's Business*, a book which advocates a U.S. industrial policy.<sup>2</sup>

National opponents of industrial policy initially attacked the program, in many cases without knowing much about it. Arthur Laffer, in a speech made in Rhode Island, lambasted the Compact while admitting he had not read it.<sup>3</sup> *Forbes* magazine sent a reporter to write a news article about the program; instead, an editorial-style piece appeared which ignored direct quotations from most business supporters and became an anti-Compact diatribe.<sup>4</sup>

After the April 1984 vote in the state legislature indicated that the referendum

would very likely pass, the national anti-industrial policy media switched gear and downplayed the Compact, depicting it not as a bona fide industrial policy but as just some specific programs created for a Rhode Island environment which in no way could be used as a model for other, larger states or for the country as a whole. Yet some of the same publications that had deemphasized the Compact's relevance following the legislative vote trumpeted the final defeat as a popular and representative referendum which clearly demonstrated that the nation's people would hate any type of industrial policy.<sup>5</sup>

Actually, there were many members of the Strategic Development Commission who were not in favor of a coherent national industrial policy. A majority of Compact proponents in the business community were most certainly President Reagan supporters who would oppose such a policy and who would probably count themselves as conservatives whose views on many issues were parallel to those of the plan's conservative opponents. The fact of the matter is that the Greenhouse Compact was a program designed by about 250 people of diverse backgrounds and political views whose priority was the formulation of a viable economic strategy for Rhode Island. The average Rhode Islander and even the vast majority of people actively engaged in a dialogue about the Compact didn't care a hill of beans about contentions over industrial policy or market imperfections or the efficiency of public/private partnerships. Rather, this ideological argument was carried out on the news pages of the *Washington Post*, on the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*, and in a few academic journals around the country. It had very little to do with Rhode Island.

The second level of debate did take place in Rhode Island, and it revolved around the specifics of the legislation that put forward the recommendations. Hundreds and probably thousands of Rhode Islanders actively debated the specifics of the Compact between October 1983 and April 1984 at public meetings, through op-ed pieces in the newspapers, and in the legislature. Besides the groups mentioned earlier—such as the state's Chambers of Commerce, the AFL-CIO, and the Black Ministers Alliance—others, including the ACLU, the State Advisory Commission on the Status of Women, the Community Labor Coalition, and a large number of businessmen, union members, and citizens of varied backgrounds voiced objections to particular aspects of the program, made proposals for amendments, and argued in the legislature both for and against many of the Compact's provisions. Hearings were held around the state. Various legislative committees were given different pieces of the program to debate; groups and individuals (including legislators) filed opinions for proposed modifications. The process was a healthy one, and the debate resulted in many changes to the original proposals. Most of these changes, in my view, were improvements.

At the end of this process, many of the participants decided to overlook the criticisms they still may have had and vote for the Compact. Some, feeling that their concerns had not been sufficiently addressed, decided to vote against it. Those legislators who had been actively involved in the public debate decided in the end to vote for the Compact. Though some of them were in fact against it and voted favorably only to send it to a referendum, the margins of passage in April 1984, along with the individual conversations we had with legislators, convince me that the Compact would have passed in the state legislature—albeit by smaller margins—even if legislators had not been voting in anticipation of a referendum.

The third debate, and the one that ultimately counted, was the debate before the public. An intense discussion on the specifics of a program, when carried out in the media and among those who surround the State House, can create the impression that everyone in the state has a keen interest in what is being discussed. In fact, most issues do not stir the public into detailed discussion, and the Compact was no exception. For the majority of Rhode Island citizens, the ideological debates about industrial policy may as well have been taking place on the moon. Even the arguments over details were not really to the point. Very few Rhode Islanders voted for or against the Compact because they thought that the research greenhouse proposals were not structured quite right or that the entrepreneurs' incentive programs were too large or even that unemployment compensation proposals were too pro labor or too pro business.

All the analysts of poll data, all the postmortem discussions, and all the experiences of the "campaign" indicate that for most voters, the decision about the Greenhouse Compact ultimately revolved around the issue of trust.

The majority of voters felt that some course of action to improve the state's economy was needed and that public action was justified in support of economic development; the majority were even prepared to invest financially in these changes. During the first seven months following the Compact's release, most voters were prepared to support it in the referendum even though they found it complex and had doubts about its size, its financing (the tax and bonds), and its structure.

The explanation for voters' loss of trust in the Greenhouse process and therefore in its ability to work lies in a combination of factors: flaws in the program's proposed structure and financing; mistakes in the way it was presented to the public; and unrelated events that raised the fear of public corruption—a fear set against the backdrop of public abuses which have marred Rhode Island's recent history. The public response can be summarized by a slogan that emerged on radio talk shows during the debate: "Clean house and then we will have a Greenhouse."

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### **The Mistakes**

Voting in a referendum, as many have observed, is different from voting for political candidates in an election. People often have some misgivings about both political candidates in a race, yet in most cases will still vote for one of them. Since voting machines do not record the degree of enthusiasm with which levers are pulled, it is not possible to say how many votes were cast for candidate X merely because voters disliked or distrusted candidate Y.

In a referendum, on the other hand, misgivings lead people to vote no. A no vote is a safe vote.

### ***The Substantive Errors***

The commission that produced the Greenhouse Compact was appointed by the governor but had no legislative authority. For the purpose of administering the program, a formally constituted legislative body was required. This second commission was to consist of representatives from business, labor, academia, and the state legislature. It was to receive almost all of its funding up front and have significant autonomy from the legislative budgetary process. Although some legislative and executive oversight was to be provided, the commission would be autonomous in most important respects. The intention was to secure freedom from political influences that might be

exerted on a year-to-year basis, as well as to provide long-term continuity to the administration of the program so that private-sector investors would feel they could trust commitments made by the Greenhouse commission. Decisions about the structure of the new commission were influenced by the desire to assuage fears of political influence. In retrospect, however, it is clear that the structure chosen did not have the desired effect, and, in terms of engendering public support, may actually have been the worst possible choice that could have been made. For the recent history of such semi-autonomous bodies in Rhode Island has only resulted in public distrust.

A number of quasi public bodies have been set up over the years in Rhode Island to administer programs. Their history has been tainted, at best. Some have become dumping grounds for political patronage; others have become hotbeds of corruption. Over the past two years, a group of indictments resulted from a scandal involving the staff of the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (RIHMFC), which is responsible for administering low-interest federal mortgages in the state. Prior to the advent of the Compact, the executive director of the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority had been indicted on account of alleged extreme liberties he had taken with his expense account. These are only two recent examples of the checkered history of such entities; there are many more.<sup>6</sup>

We who had volunteered our time to the SDC could not understand at first how voters could distrust our motives, since we ourselves had done nothing to engender distrust; but given the context in which we were working, such a response was quite understandable. Many voters feared that the legislated commission would turn out to be just another quasi public agency with large sums of money that would be mishandled. Ironically, the action we took to mitigate this fear actually helped fuel it.

The second mistake we made was in regard to financing. The commission asked for a one-time tax to fund a portion of the program and suggested that much of the remainder be financed with bonds. The motivation for this was twofold: to keep monetary decisions about the program separate from ongoing legislative decisions about the funding of other programs; and to ask Rhode Islanders to make an explicit sacrifice in order to fund the economic development of the state.

By the time the report was issued, the public was well aware that there was going to be a substantial surplus in the state budget. An unpopular tax surcharge had been levied in the previous year during the depths of the recession, and the recovery had produced revenue surpluses in the state sales and income tax accounts. There was enough money in the state treasury to fund the entire seven-year package. Even more: as part of his budget message in 1984, the governor proposed a tax cut equal to \$27 million per year while requesting the bond issue and one-time tax to fund the Compact. The cut was enacted, and by the end of that fiscal year, it became evident that even further tax cuts were possible, and these also were enacted. A portion of the state surplus could have been donated to the Compact with only legislative approval—no one-time tax, no bond issue with associated interest payments, and no referendum.

In view of these facts, the commission's financial recommendations for the Compact seem politically naive. But we believed it was proper to go to the voters with the program even though there was no requirement for this procedure; I still believe it was unequivocally the right thing to do. We also felt strongly about keeping our funding separate from the funding for other programs and agreed that a positive vote on a one-time tax would provide a symbolic message to the nation that Rhode

Islanders were prepared to impose a levy on themselves in the interest of economic development. Such a move, we thought, would send a clear signal to the outside world about our commitment to turn around the state's anti-economic development image.

But again our good intentions boomeranged. The inclusion of the one-time tax shifted debate in the media about the Compact as a jobs program to debate about the Compact as a tax program. Owing to the interest payments associated with the bonds, the bond issue inflated the stated cost of the program, and it also incurred a public outcry about banks supporting the Compact in order to obtain profits from floating the bonds. In early polls, 65 percent of voters said that it was wrong for the commission to ask for a one-time tax when the state government had a surplus.

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Compact proponents made a third mistake when they tried to rush the referendum election. Once more, the motives were good but the decision itself did not mesh with the mood of the people. November 1984 would have been the obvious time to schedule the referendum election; a positive vote at this time would have meant ratification of new commission members in early 1985 and a gearing up of commission activities in the spring of 1985. But members of the SDC did not want to wait that long. The investment upturn that had occurred across the country in the winter of 1983 and the first half of 1984 was cause for optimism; however, the fear of a recession or at least a slowdown of investment sometime in 1985 was shared by many.<sup>7</sup> Commission members also feared that waiting until November would tie up the program in the political issues of the 1984 elections. Anxious to avoid this circumstance and to ride the investment boom, the SDC recommended a special election in February or March 1984 to vote on the Compact. A special election was held, though not until June.

To a suspicious public, the move for a special election seemed like an attempt to railroad the program through. Both the suggested timing and the special-election mechanism itself contributed to this impression and stimulated the fear that supporters would be able to bring out people and win on a small turnout.

### ***The Procedural Errors***

Mistakes were also made in the presentation of the Compact to the public. Some mistakes were major, some were minor, but it all added up to a poor effort. For example, the program was introduced as a package—a compact among business, labor, education, and government leaders who normally are at war with each other. The purpose of this strategy was to preclude these groups from causing the whole program to unravel through efforts to delete elements not to their liking. To the public perception, however, the package appeared to be an all-or-nothing, take-it-or-leave-it proposition negotiated among elites, with insufficient opportunity provided for modification by the people.

In fact, the SDC had always understood that changes would be made through citizen input in the legislative process, and it had scheduled the eight hundred statewide meetings to encourage such input. Unfortunately, the all-or-nothing image stuck with the package, and so did the public resentment it engendered.

The commission had based its public-relations strategy on small-group meetings around the state and on meetings with leadership groups to seek endorsements. The idea of the small-group meetings came out of our feeling that the program was too complex and too important to be reduced to thirty-second commercials; we wanted to spend a few hours with voters at their clubs, churches, social and professional

groups, unions, and so on, to discuss it in detail.

The meetings with leadership groups were organized on the assumption that people who did not have the time or interest to study the program directly would be influenced by the opinions of those they had elected to various positions, whether in their unions, their Chambers of Commerce, their State Nurses' Association, or other groups.

As it turned out, both kinds of meetings, though necessary, were not in themselves enough to influence passage of the referendum. A poll taken by the Providence College team in mid June 1984, after the referendum election, showed that only 6 percent of those who voted had ever attended either type of meeting (though this was obscured by the fact that of those who did attend, many had gone to more than one meeting). Further, when asked whether they were aware that leadership groups supported the Compact, 90 percent of respondents answered in the affirmative; but when asked whether this support had influenced their vote, only 11 percent said it had influenced them to vote positively. Sixty-nine percent said it had not affected their vote at all; and 20 percent said that the support of the leadership groups had influenced them to vote negatively.

Perhaps the commission's biggest procedural errors—those which had the greatest effect ultimately—were made three weeks before the election, when the public was beginning to focus on the vote more directly. These errors had to do with the commission appointments.

In order to allay fears that the program would be administered by “political hacks” and in order to initiate an open process, the governor and the legislative leadership had promised to make known the names of commission appointees prior to the vote so that people would know who their choices were. Through the enabling legislation, the governor, House Speaker, and Senate majority leader (all Democrats) were to share in the making of appointments to the new commission. Altogether, twenty-one commissioners were to be appointed: nineteen from the private sector, and two legislators from the public sector (one from the Senate and one from the House). The governor and legislative leaders conferred with the leaders of the original commission about their decisions, and two issues emerged in these discussions: the representation of women and minorities on the commission, and selection of the two legislators.

None of the appointees to the original commission had been members of minority groups (though there was minority representation on the advisory committee), and only two of the nineteen members had been women. The lack of representation had brought on protest from these communities. Within the SDC, there were differences of opinion on this issue. Some believed that women and minorities should be better represented on the new commission; others were more concerned with regional mix, with representation from various elements of the business community, and so on. Discussion about selection of the two legislators centered on whether the House Speaker and Senate majority leader, as the two most influential members of these bodies, should appoint themselves to the new commission. Those in favor of this idea believed that the self-appointments would demonstrate the importance that the legislature placed on the program; others thought the move would run the risk of politicizing the program in the minds of the voters.

I supported greater representation for women and minorities on the new commission as well as the appointments of the Speaker and majority leader. I lost the argument I should have won and won the argument I should have lost. Only three women

commissioners and one minority commissioner were appointed, and the Speaker and majority leader did appoint themselves. Announcement of these appointments created a loud public protest that dominated television and newspaper coverage of the referendum election for most of the three weeks prior to the event. The State Advisory Commission on the Status of Women and the Black Ministers Alliance eventually endorsed the Compact and urged a yes vote, but the enthusiasm of their membership waned, clearly from the lack of representation. The initial protests of these groups received front-page coverage, but their endorsements, when they came, went virtually unreported.

That dispute had an unquestionably detrimental effect on the fate of the Compact, but the real furor erupted over the two legislative appointments. The Republican candidate for governor (now incumbent) Edward DiPrete, who had declared his support for the program, publicly denounced the self-appointments of the two Democratic legislative leaders (who were also supporters of the program) and demanded that they resign and appoint one Republican in their stead. The controversy raged for almost two weeks, with the Democratic legislative leaders refusing to bow to the wishes of the Republican gubernatorial candidate.

Even when voters were unaware of the specifics of the feud, they knew that political squabbling was engulfing the Compact. Phone calls made to voters by Compact supporters during this time revealed a significant erosion of confidence, as people reacted to what they considered the politicization of the entire undertaking. It was clear that continued publicity of this conflict would cause the program's defeat. A compromise reached with the Republican and Democratic leadership established that the Democratic Speaker and majority leader would be retained on the commission, while the two Republican minority leaders would be added, thus increasing the membership of the commission by two seats.

But the agreement had the appearance of a political deal struck behind closed doors, one that would merely expand the size of the group that would be administering \$250 million; and it signified to the public that political deal-making and a willingness to bend the rules (the composition and size of the commission) would be as typical of the body administering the Greenhouse Compact as it had been of many previous bodies of the same type. So the last-ditch attempt to resolve the problem only made it worse. Both sides finally agreed to support the compromise and go all out to help secure passage of the referendum, but it was too late. The public debate was over, but its effect on the people of Rhode Island had been devastating.

### ***Other Problems***

Our mistakes were intensified by a series of events over which the commission had no control. The mayor of Providence was indicted and removed from office in the months just before the referendum.<sup>8</sup> Indictments of three city officials in the Department of Public Works were made known on the day of the vote, with an announcement that one of them was to have been a referendum poll watcher that day.<sup>9</sup> In the last weeks before the election, I made a number of speeches, particularly at senior citizen centers, in support of the Compact. (Senior citizens made up an estimated 55 percent of the vote on the day of the referendum.) During the course of my talks, the indictments—even though they were completely unrelated to the program—were brought up repeatedly as evidence of why the Compact could not succeed.

By the time the vote was taken, many people were in no mood to approve large

sums of money to be administered by the state's establishment. In the December and March Hart polls, voters had expressed the belief that children and the unemployed would receive the most benefit from passage of the Greenhouse Compact. But a majority of voters queried in exit polls by the Providence College pollsters said that the greatest beneficiaries would be politicians and big business.

The organized ideological opponents of the Compact were active and highly visible for the last six months of the effort, but they had little effect on the outcome; they mostly were preaching to their own converts. It was the naiveté and miscalculations of the Compact's supporters, combined with the unhappy timing of unrelated events, that in the end sounded the death knell for the Greenhouse Compact.

In retrospect, it is hard to blame the people of Rhode Island for the judgment they made. A raft of new additional scandals involving broad sectors of the state's public and private communities have emerged over the past eighteen months.<sup>10</sup> Some of these scandals have centered around quasi public boards whose structure was similar to that of the SDC.

Those of us who were closely involved with the SDC were too immersed in it to imagine that anyone could project onto our effort the kinds of problems that had plagued other state endeavors. We also didn't realize that most people perceived the entire undertaking as remote, hard to comprehend, and difficult to distinguish from other less worthy activities, especially given the mistakes described earlier.

Even though I am fully convinced that the Compact, if enacted into law, would have had a very positive effect on the state's economy, I can easily understand why most people ultimately decided not to vote for it.

Two questions have been asked frequently since the defeat of the program: How could people as successful as those who worked on the Greenhouse Compact have made the mistakes described here? and, What would I do differently if I had it to do all over again?

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### **Why the Mistakes?**

A year of intensive study had been required to formulate the recommendations that became the Greenhouse Compact. In contrast, discussions about how to organize and finance the commission and how to present the package to the public lasted less than a month—in hindsight, clearly too short a time.

Even more to the point, almost all of the individuals who worked on the Compact were simultaneously performing full-time jobs as heads of companies or unions or institutions of education. *All* of the commission members had put an exhausting year into the writing of the report, with an especially intense effort required in the four months between July and October of 1983. Being relatively inexperienced in the public arena, we were simply not prepared for the tremendous demand that would be made on our time during the nine months of public debate about the Compact. Commission members attended about eight hundred public meetings; held numerous, long sessions with legislators and with dozens of interest groups that were debating the Compact; worked on writing and rewriting legislation; and held many strategy sessions.

My own business required me to make many trips during the months of the Compact's promotion: four to the Far East, five to Europe, two to Latin America, and

60 numerous trips around the United States. I was forced to be absent for seventeen days in May. The travel schedules of the commission chairman, the governor, and myself prevented us from meeting together during the four weeks before the appointments were made to the commission, which contributed to the mistakes made in that process. In February, it had looked as though the election would be held in early May, so we all postponed necessary travel until late May. No one foresaw that the election would be in June, and that the end of May would become the most crucial period of all, when public support unraveled.

These observations do not provide an excuse for the mistakes that were made, but they do go some way toward explaining them. The Compact stirred up all the emotions of a political campaign—or perhaps more—and the situation was further complicated by the fact that positions were spelled out in minute detail instead of being painted with the broad brush strokes of the usual campaign. A normal campaign is hard enough, even when conducted by full-time candidates and staff. We were part-time amateurs.

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### **Lessons to Be Learned**

After the defeat of the Greenhouse Compact, I talked with a number of officials in other states, most of whom suggested that the program was far too complex to have gone to a referendum. They said that any need for a referendum had been disposed of by the program's success in uniting a disparate and wide range of leadership groups in a normally divided state, and by its passage in the state legislature by significant majorities; these things alone, in their opinion, would have been considered extraordinary accomplishments, and the program would have won the hearts of the people as they experienced its beneficial effects over the years.

While I understand the pragmatism embodied in their comments, I do not agree. I believe that any program as far-reaching as the Greenhouse Compact should be put to the people for approval as a matter of principle. Further, in my judgment the program could have succeeded at the polls had we proceeded differently with it:

The Compact should have been brought to the public as a draft, not as a fait accompli, and the public meetings should have been overtly designed as a forum for amending the proposals.

The election should have been held in November 1984; this would have avoided rushing the process, and voters wouldn't have felt they were being pressured.

The financing for the program should have been requested incrementally over the life of the Compact, with some means of guaranteeing its continuity; this would have eliminated the necessity of forcing people to vote for all the funds up front.

More checks and balances and more legislative oversight should have been built into the administrative structure of the program to ensure that it would be administered meritoriously.

The SDC should have been made more representative of all Rhode Islanders.

Communication with the public at large should have been more comprehensive.

In the final analysis, it is almost impossible to enact a program of very broad significance unless citizens have a certain basic level of trust in their government, and the deep-seated suspicion of corruption and patronage in the state did not lay a good

foundation for the Greenhouse Compact. Nevertheless, if the December, March, and May polls were accurate, the program might well have succeeded with the voters of Rhode Island had it not been marred by the fatal flaws discussed in this article. And I still am convinced that it would have made an overwhelming positive difference to Rhode Island's future.

Perhaps the most poignant moment of our two years of work occurred two days before the vote, on Sunday, June 10.

Most people who had been closely involved with the Compact knew by then that it would be defeated. But their dedication was still strong, and they decided on the Friday preceding the referendum that they would exert one last effort to show the people of Rhode Island the depth of feeling that supported the Compact and the unlikely alliances that had formed to propose it.

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On one day's notice, leaders of the fifty or so groups that had endorsed the Compact were asked to come to a march in support of it. The architects of the procession had drawn up a plan for about one hundred people to march five miles from Slater Mill in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, the birthplace of the U.S. industrial revolution and the town where the Compact legislation had been signed, to the Roger Williams Monument in Providence, the site of the founding of Rhode Island and the city where the Compact had been unveiled. Despite the short notice and despite the 105 degree heat, not one person who had been asked to participate and who was in town that day failed to march. A few people—such as Father Thomas R. Peterson, the highly respected president of Providence College—even flew back from out of town to take part.

Because of the heat, the streets were deserted. The procession must have offered a curious sight in this decade of the eighties. Heads of the Chambers of Commerce movement in the state and of some of the state's most successful businesses marched arm in arm with labor leaders, college presidents, and U.S. Senator Pell; and with leaders of the Rhode Island State Nurses' Association; the Rhode Island Association of Realtors; the Black Ministers Alliance; high school and college student council associations; the Association of Mayors; the State Hospital Association; the state chapter of Vietnam Veterans; the State Advisory Commission on the Status of Women; and dozens of other groups. Even elderly representatives of the state's Association of Retired People and the Gray Panthers marched part of the way (they alternated walking time with a bus ride that was provided for them).

The march was high-spirited, even though nearly everyone knew it was no longer possible to influence the vote. The media coverage of the event symbolized the futility of the effort and the failure to communicate. Two of the three local television stations, having been notified very late, failed altogether to report the march. An internal miscommunication led the third station to believe that the march would begin, not end, at the Roger Williams Monument. That night, on its 6 P.M. news broadcast, the station reported that a group of Compact supporters, looking very tired, had gathered at the monument for five minutes, and, having decided not to hold their march, had boarded some buses and left. The commentator, who was totally unaware that a march had taken place, related the story in disgust. A headline the following morning in the *Providence Journal* declared, "Greenhouse supporters brave heat while public cools to the Compact."

## The Aftermath

The most important residual effects of the Greenhouse Compact are the positive relationships that were established among so many of the state's leaders and the common understanding that has emerged about the state's problems and their solutions. Pieces of the Compact have already been implemented in Rhode Island since the referendum, and other pieces are likely to be implemented over time. In addition, officials in many other states have studied the program and have been influenced by parts of it in their own policy planning.

The people who worked on the Compact all had successful careers that continued after it was defeated. None of them received any financial benefit from the Compact, and none of them would have received such benefit had it been enacted into law. The defeat of the Compact did not unfavorably affect their professional lives. Rather, for those who participated, the pain of the defeat resulted from a strong feeling that Rhode Island had missed a great opportunity. And it was our strong feelings about Rhode Island and its people which had led us to initiate the effort in the first place.

Like the football player who is used to being successful but who causes his team to lose an important game by dropping some crucial passes, we have only ourselves to blame, ultimately. The people of Rhode Island made an understandable choice, given the circumstances of the state and the way the Compact was structured and presented to them. That is what is so disappointing.

Despite this, positive changes have already materialized in Rhode Island because of our effort, and more changes are forthcoming. For this reason, and because the goals were right, I do not regret the Greenhouse Compact.

## Notes

1. The analysis was entitled *The Greenhouse Compact: A Report by the Rhode Island Strategic Development Commission*. It was published in October 1983 by Jeffrey Dawson Associates of Boston.
2. Ira C. Magaziner and Robert B. Reich, *Minding America's Business: The Decline and Rise of the American Economy* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982; Random House, Vintage Books, 1983).
3. Arthur B. Laffer criticized the Greenhouse Compact in an address before the Old Stone Bank's Business Development Council on 15 November 1983 at the Biltmore Plaza Hotel in Providence.
4. Walecia Konrad, "The Wrong Medicine," *Forbes* 133, no. 6 (12 March 1984): 95.
5. For examples of articles that heralded the defeat of the Compact as evidence of the nation's anti-industrial policy sentiment, see Tamar Lewin, "Cynicism Cited in Plan's Loss: Rhode Island Development," *New York Times*, 14 June 1984, 42(N), D-20(L); "Industrial Policy Revolt," *Wall Street Journal* editorial, 25 June 1984, 28-E; and Howard Kurtz, "A New Idea Fizzles on Launch: Skeptical Rhode Islanders," *Washington Post*, 15 July 1984, B-5.
6. A probe was begun in April 1982 concerning the expense account activities of James Canning, director of the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority. Charges were brought against him in April 1983 and he was ordered to trial in May 1984, but owing to his poor health, the trial was delayed until January 1985. George Marshall was a former state representative and a chief security officer of the adjudication division of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation. He was charged with corruption on 30 June 1984 and was indicted for a ticket-fixing scheme along with Thomas Reilly, an auto emissions control inspector. Ralph A. Pari, executive director of the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (RIHMFC), was indicted on 7

December 1985 on various charges; Robert J. DeCesaris, legal counsel for RIHMFC, was indicted on 31 December 1985.

7. Data Resources, Inc., of Lexington, Massachusetts, and Chase Econometrics of New York City were among the forecasters of an economic slowdown in 1985; both companies issued reports in 1983–84 citing evidence for their predictions.
8. Mayor Vincent A. Cianci, Jr., resigned from office on 25 April 1984. He was originally charged with six counts of assault, kidnapping, and extortion in relation to reprisals against his wife's alleged boyfriend. He was convicted of one count of felonious assault and received a five-year sentence. Shortly after his forced resignation, Cianci declared his intention to fill the seat his resignation had vacated. He was prevented from so doing by the Rhode Island State Supreme Court.
9. Edward "Buckles" Melise, Providence city highway superintendent, was indicted on 18 April 1984 on extortion charges; on 11 June 1984, he was charged with bribery, conspiring to commit bribery, embezzlement, and conspiring to embezzle. He had been slated to be a poll watcher for the Compact referendum. Edward T. Marfeo, an employee of the Department of Public Works under Melise, was charged with aiding and abetting bribery, conspiring to commit bribery, and conspiring to embezzle. In a related matter, another DPW employee, Palmino Vecchio, was charged with one count of assault and one count of intimidating a witness.
10. On 14 November 1984, the *Providence Journal* added the following names to the list of those indicted in the RIHMFC and Department of Transportation scandals: Robert D. Murray, former chief of staff for Governor Edward DiPrete, was charged with obtaining money under false pretenses and filing a false document to obtain his low-interest RIHMFC loan; he pleaded innocent in Rhode Island Superior Court on 13 November 1985. Harry R. Speight, a Rhode Island state trooper who served as driver both for Governor DiPrete and former governor J. Joseph Garrahy, was charged with one count of conspiring to obtain money under false pretenses and one count of conspiring to file a false document in connection with his RIHMFC mortgage. Helen O'Donnell, vice president of Fleet National Bank's mortgage department, and Lois Martin, a Fleet National Bank mortgage officer, were charged in the alleged conspiracy with Harry R. Speight; the two bankers were also charged together on a third count of filing a false document. John E. Corrigan, the former chief financial officer of RIHMFC, was charged with three counts of obtaining money, goods, and property under false pretenses from RIHMFC. Gwendolyn Rotelli, a former RIHMFC property management analyst, was indicted in connection with pleasure trips that she allegedly took with RIHMFC executive director Ralph Pari at agency expense. Anthony Saccucci was a Department of Transportation engineer on the Pawtucket Route 95 S-curve project; he was charged with conspiring to obtain money under false pretenses and with obtaining money under false pretenses. James Forte, vice president of Forte Bros. Construction Co., and Vincent DeQuattro, Forte's administrative assistant, were each indicted on one count of obtaining more than \$500 under false pretenses and one count of conspiring to obtain money under false pretenses in connection with overcharges paid by the state Department of Transportation on the Route 95 S-curve project in Pawtucket. William Cimini and Angelo Landi, the former an officer and the latter an employee of Highway Safety Ltd., were charged with obtaining money under false pretenses and conspiring to obtain money under false pretenses. All of the above faced charges in court on 13 November 1985.

## Regionalism:

## The Next Step

Ian Menzies

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*Although the New England states have, over the years, been regionally cooperative, they have not formally advanced the process since the establishment of the New England Governors' Conference in 1937. There is still no regional government in New England; no body politic that can enact regionwide laws; no organization authorized to perform regionwide planning, or with the power to regulate or direct growth and development or manage natural resources. There isn't even a public forum or assembly where such issues can be discussed. This article reviews the history of regionalism in New England and proposes that the six states develop a more mature approach to complex regional issues by forming a New England Council of Governments.*

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Calvin Coolidge, as far as I'm aware, never said much about regionalism. Some say he never said much about anything, but he understood very well the spirit of recalcitrance and contrariness embodied in the New England psyche, which, on occasion, he reflected with a wry wit. For example, we have the story of the day Coolidge and some companions were standing beside a bridle path in Montpelier. A state senator who never agreed with anyone or anything happened to ride by. Said Coolidge, turning to his friends: "Must bother him to be going the same way as the horse."

Contrariness, a New England characteristic intimately familiar to the Yankee Coolidge, has, over the years, taken many forms, among them a disinclination by the six New England states toward any extended degree of regional cooperation. Although formal efforts to promote regionalism in New England go back some fifty years, overall results have been less than distinguished. And, curiously, little has been done to review or evaluate those efforts with an aim toward overcoming limitations through an improved process.

Yet how can New England continue to enjoy both prosperity and livability without a far more effective, systematized regional approach to growth, planning, increasing densities, pollution, transportation, conservation of natural resources, and the internal distribution of people, services, and jobs? But first, it would be helpful to agree on what is meant by *regionalism*, that is, as the term applies to a group of states rather than to divisions within a single state.

Throughout this article, regionalism is considered a positive thing. It is defined simply as the concept that those states which share a geographic identity may also

share certain economic, social, cultural, and political characteristics which, through cooperation, they can exploit to their mutual benefit. It is also reasonable to say that the six New England states do form a fairly natural homogeneous grouping; that as a whole this fact has been accepted by New Englanders; that efforts to think and act regionally have improved in recent years; but that despite this progress there is, as yet, no formalized regional agenda, assembly, or legislative process.

One would think that the need to formalize the regional process would be self-evident. More self-evident, however, has been the lack of cooperation among the states; a lack of cooperation that at times has devolved into bizarre bickering. Some may remember the Battle of the Bottle back in the late 1950s, when Bay State tax men would spy on New Hampshire's tax-free liquor stores, identify Massachusetts buyers through the use of binoculars and hand signals, then nail Bay Staters for unpaid liquor taxes as they reentered their home state. Updated versions of this border tax war continue. Recently Massachusetts revenueurs went after big-ticket hard goods dealers who have warehouses in Massachusetts but retail outlets in New Hampshire, where, free of a sales tax, they can undersell their Massachusetts competition.

Taxes, indeed, have been a major aggravation between the New England states for years, and not just sales taxes. Income taxes also have caused friction, because some states have them (Massachusetts and Rhode Island), while others don't (New Hampshire and Connecticut). The result, according to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, is that some Bay Staters who live along the border but work in Connecticut or New Hampshire have avoided paying taxes to their home state, an evasion unfair to their fellow citizens. That evasion, however, may now end, or at least be reduced, as early this year tax officials of nine Northeastern states agreed to compare their computer files in an effort to track down tax cheats—a good illustration of voluntary regional cooperation.

But there are still many unnecessary conflicts fed by that old New England characteristic that some call rugged individualism and others call illogical contrariness. Why, for instance, do the New England states still have different rules and regulations for the taking and selling of certain shellfish? Why different legal lengths for flounder, cod, and haddock? And the variation in mesh size from state to state is not conducive to the preservation of immature fish. Positive steps were taken in 1984 to standardize minimal lengths for lobsters, soft-shell clams, and striped bass, but more has to be done, especially in the interests of conserving overfished species, such as the food-important black-back flounder. Surely the rules governing the taking of fish and shellfish, inshore and offshore, should be the same.

It's been much the same with the drinking age, with one state setting it at eighteen, another at nineteen, and yet another at twenty-one. The outcome was predictable. Thousands of teenagers, seeking drinking legality, simply drove across borders, thus increasing the risk of highway tragedy. Not until quite recently, pressured by the campaign of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), did the New England states make a serious regional effort to agree on a uniform drinking age of twenty-one. Vermont, however, as of late 1985, was still a holdout, with the *Boston Globe* reporting thousands of young people flocking into Vermont on weekends to drink or buy beer or liquor, or do both. Vermont is finally expected to fall into line with the other New England states this year under pressure from the federal highway administration,

which has threatened to withhold highway funds from states that fail to raise the drinking age to twenty-one by October 1986.

New England also has failed miserably in maintaining, let alone improving, interstate transit, where the need for collaboration and a united front is a prerequisite. Think, for instance, how airline congestion could be eased both in Boston and New York with the alternative of fast rail. New bullet trains wouldn't be necessary. What is needed is completion of rail electrification between New Haven and Boston, along with some new track, plus track straightening, completion of an updated signal system, and, perhaps as much as anything, a single routing authority throughout the length of the line, which would permit three-hour travel time between downtown Boston and downtown New York, thus providing a service that would be comparable to current fast Metroliner service between New York and Washington. As of today it looks as though Montreal's far-sighted, big-project mayor, Jean Drapeau, may successfully promote three-hour fast rail between Montreal and New York before we here in New England have three-hour rail between Boston and New York, even though the distance from New York to Montreal is two hundred miles farther.<sup>1</sup>

Fast rail between Boston and New York is the only way to reduce steadily worsening delays at Boston's Logan Airport, both in the air and on the ground. Logan's multiplying problems, which, if allowed to continue, could eventually force a more distant relocation of the airport, are directly tied to the fact that the Boston-to-New-York air corridor is the busiest in the nation, with an incredible volume of 4.4 million passengers annually. Despite this, the New England states haven't done nearly enough to push for a competitive transit alternative to the New York shuttle. Yet a business person, using three-hour rail, could, on many days, make it from downtown Boston to New York faster than taking the shuttle would permit, a situation that will worsen with mounting need for greater airport security.

There is also a major need, especially in the northern half of New England, to restore passenger rail to and through Boston to the south. In the densifying Northeast corridor, the future for buses and cars will worsen, the result of mounting gridlock in and around the region's cities. We are running out of capacity on our highways as well as space to park at journey's end. Obviously New England should stop thinking highways, even air, and instead think fast rail for both people and freight, thus preserving airports for national and international travel. Fast rail is a regional challenge that has been sidetracked by the New England congressional delegation, governors, and state legislatures ever since it was derailed by the governor of Connecticut in 1971 because the proposed track realignment would have bypassed several coastal communities then, and still, receiving service. And the way not to go, yet the way we're going, is to build ever longer and heavier trucks (already up to fifty tons), along with smaller and smaller cars—a suicidal policy. The day when entire families (five or six people at a time) can be wiped out is already upon us.

Collective advances have been made on long-range power needs, some involving Canada, as well as on the need to protect groundwater, which doesn't observe state lines. And positive steps—including badgering the Reagan administration—have been taken by the governors to find a compromise solution to the deadly dangers of acid rain. But virtually no progress has been made in selecting a regional site or sites for disposal of low-level nuclear waste, which New England produces in greater volume per capita than any other region.

The picture is clear. There is no formal regionalism, with a couple of exceptions. Most of what happens results from a handshake between the New England governors, or, as in the case of acid rain, because the issue beats on the heads of New Englanders and kills the fish in their ponds and the trees in their forests. There are, it's true, literally scores of organizations that have New England-wide interests in special areas such as conservation, preservation, energy, medicine, water, and business, but in the final analysis, in seeking regional unification, such organizations can operate only on a state-by-state basis.

There is no regional government in New England; no body politic that can enact regionwide laws; no organization authorized to perform regionwide planning or with the power to regulate and/or direct growth and development or manage natural resources. There isn't even a public forum or assembly where such issues can be discussed; where a consensus and constituency for regional proposals could be developed and an agenda generated. Instead what we have are special-interest regional organizations, which, through congressionally approved compacts between two or more of the New England states, have been delegated powers to form interstate agreements. Existing compacts currently cover such areas as higher education, public safety, flood control, and prisons.

The best known and perhaps most beneficial of these compacts is the one which, in 1955, established the New England Board of Higher Education and which was ratified by all six states and the U.S. Congress. It is the purpose of the board to advance, develop, and direct programs and activities that increase higher educational opportunities and that improve efficiency in the use of resources among New England's academic institutions.<sup>2</sup> Since 1957, the board's Regional Student Program has made it possible for more than fifty thousand New England students to attend out-of-state public colleges and universities in the region at reduced tuition rates for specialized degree programs not offered by in-state public institutions. Through this program, for instance, a student in Maine, a state without a medical school, can attend one of the New England state universities that has a medical school, at considerable savings over private school costs. Currently, some five thousand students, each realizing an average tuition savings of more than \$2,000, are enrolled in this regional program. It is the largest such program in the nation.

It would be foolish, however, to take the board's continued existence for granted. In 1982 Connecticut threatened to pull out of the compact—ostensibly to cut costs—but Governor William A. O'Neill strongly supported continuation, pointing out that “More, not less, regional collaboration is needed in behalf of New England's growing knowledge-intensive economy. . . . Board services link the research and manpower training capabilities of higher education to economic development.”<sup>3</sup>

The New England Board of Higher Education, headed by John C. Hoy, best represents the type of effective, publicly beneficial organization that can be produced by, as well as serve, regionalism. Its limitation is that it deals with only one facet of New England life, albeit a critically important one: education. In fact, however, the board has interpreted its mission of education liberally, and, quite sensibly, as the only broad-based regional organization around, has expanded its activities to regional economic studies such as job training and the New England economy *per se*.

It doesn't have to seek far for justification. Higher education is one of the most important industries in New England. The annual expenditure of the region's 260 col-

leges and universities is approximately \$4 billion, and they generate about \$10 billion in revenues, which is close to 8 percent of the gross regional product. Currently under way is a two-year study of the region's nine medical schools and teaching hospital centers which aims to evaluate their role in the regional economy and their importance to the region's developing biomedical, biotechnical industries. The study is being chaired by Dr. James M. Howell, senior vice president and chief economist of the Bank of Boston who, although a Texan, knows more about the New England economy than anyone else. In his view, the importance of these nine academic regional health centers is absolutely pivotal to the long-term competitive strength of New England.<sup>4</sup>

One other effective regional organization, although in the private rather than public sector, is the New England Council, which is made up of 1,200 member firms—banks, manufacturing companies, utilities, and so on—and employs over 1 million New Englanders. Over the years, the council has both contributed to a positive investment climate in New England and encouraged general economic growth. Although self-interest lobbying hasn't always endeared it to liberals, the council has taken broader stands as, for instance, in 1982, when it sought to set up a New England Assembly, a sort of Aspen Institute-type think tank to focus on New England issues. Curiously, to outsiders at least, the New England Council and the Massachusetts High Technology Council, representing 150 member firms with 240,000 employees—130,000 of them in Massachusetts—have not seen fit to collaborate. The High Tech Council, the newer group, obviously feels its interests are best served through independent representation and, as of now, on a nonregional basis.

This brings us to the two umbrella political organizations which currently offer the only forums in which to discuss and act, in a limited sense, on a broad spectrum of regional issues. One is the New England Governors' Conference, established in 1937, and the other is the much lesser known, more recent Caucus of New England State Legislatures, formed in 1978. The Governors' Conference, which meets four times a year, has a most competent but small staff of fifteen, headed by William Gildea, and a current annual budget of \$858,000 (based on \$75,000 per state plus a per capita contribution). The conference staff, based in Boston, does draw on various state agencies throughout the region for help in research and analysis.

Areas of interest currently under discussion by the governors include energy, fish (the boundary dispute with Canada on Georges Bank), acid rain, groundwater, low- and high-level nuclear waste, and interstate banking. In addition to their four meetings a year, the governors of the six New England states meet with the governors of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania in an enlarged group known as CONEG (Coalition of Northeast Governors). The New Englanders also meet with the premiers of Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces—New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland—thus extending their interests and concerns to the north, south, and west of New England itself. Energy and fish have been the principal topics at meetings with the Canadian premiers. Groundwater was the subject of the last CONEG meeting in August 1985, at which time the Northeast governors urged the federal government not to cut back on waste-water treatment projects and also urged it to set national standards for drinking water. At one of their meetings in Springfield last fall, the New England governors learned, to their immense satisfaction, that the Reagan administration had finally admitted the governors were right

about acid rain, that, indeed, it is formed by sulphates and that those sulphates should, as far as possible, be eliminated.

However, the Governors' Conference, while showing a growing effectiveness, still remains a policy-proposing rather than a law-making body. The conference's limitations are obvious. Little can be achieved unless all six governors agree; even then, the governors cannot pass any laws or allocate any funds. As in their own states, they can only propose. It is up to the individual legislatures to dispose. The governors can and do have an impact on setting policy, but the process, almost literally, is a handshake operation.

Nor would the history of regionalism in New England be complete without reference to two additional organizations which, though now defunct, did play a role in its advancement and which could, I suppose, like the phoenix, return reborn. The first was the New England Regional Commission, spawned by President Johnson's Great Society, one of eight federally sponsored agencies commissioned to revitalize areas suffering from a lack of economic development. Of the eight agencies, first established in 1967, only one—the Appalachia Commission—struggles on, underfunded. At the same time, the feds also established the New England River Basins Commission under the Water Resources Planning Act of 1965, its mission to plan for and conserve water resources.

The New England Regional Commission was jinxed from the start, deadened by an excess of political appointments. By 1972 it had become the subject of a newspaper probe by the *Boston Globe*, which, among other things, described it as a "do-nothing bureaucracy squandering millions of dollars in bookshelf studies."<sup>5</sup> Before the commission went out of business, however, a much more improved, more professional staff produced a New England Regional Plan and Economic Development Strategy that was substantive and that deserved implementation. The River Basins Commission, as opposed to the Regional Commission, worked smoothly and more professionally from the start and contributed a great deal to a New England-wide awareness of the need to conserve water resources. It was an agency that, had it continued, would have been more appreciated now than then. It was ahead of its time, which is ideal for planning purposes but not from a political point of view. The agency withered from lack of public and, in turn, congressional support.

President Carter, who, while governor of Georgia, had been at odds with the leadership of the Georgia Regional Commission, in presenting his final presidential budget declined to fund any of the nation's regional commissions. Appalachia was excepted. The cuts were sustained by President Reagan. When the two New England commissions died in 1981, the New England governors, wisely, approved the transfer of staffers from the successful River Basins Commission to the Governors' Conference. Thus ended a well-intentioned national effort at regionalism, as well as some \$8 million annually in federal funds which had been allocated to the two New England commissions.

So, what we're left with is the Governors' Conference and the Caucus of New England State Legislatures as the only two agencies with even a semblance of New England-wide influence. But neither has legislative authority. What is needed today is a breakthrough; an advance to a new plateau; a next step in regionalism. What should it be?

This is an opportune time to think regionalism. New England is flying high. The

National Planning Association predicts substantial population gains for both New Hampshire and Massachusetts between now and the year 2000—a gain of 560,000 for Massachusetts and 373,000 for New Hampshire. And, according to the U.S. Commerce Department, New England is today the richest region in the nation, with a per capita average income of \$14,421. Surely this is the time to plan a strategy that will maintain the region's gains, conserve resources, and lessen the pockets of poverty, whether rural, as in some of the sparsely populated northern counties, or urban, as in cities like Hartford, Providence, New Haven, Boston, Lewiston, Springfield, and Nashua. There is an enormous need for a New England-wide job training program that can meet the changing demands of the region, from shoes and cotton to high tech and biotechnology; a job training program that would develop a mobile work force prepared to move to wherever jobs in the region arose. There is a need for regional job fluidity, something that a new generation of schoolchildren should be taught as a norm so as to avoid depressed cities and communities.

Equally important is the need to expand agriculture in New England, utilizing greenhouses to extend the vegetable growing season while selectively reordering priorities in the breeding of farm animals. New England imports nearly 90 percent of its produce, 80 percent from California. There is a market here for fresher, tastier, less artificially preserved foodstuffs and the technology to grow it year round, but a strategy supported by all six states will be required to ensure effective marketing. With water problems in the West, which could cut production and raise prices, it would make sense for New England to become more self-sufficient in agricultural products. The handling and marketing of New England's fresh-fish catch could also stand improvement, and with new technology promising added shelf life, more fresh fish could be exported to the Midwest, thus adding to the value of this industry.

With a critical shortage of low- and low-middle-income housing, it would make sense to consider a public-private, independent regional authority to contract for and build such housing (at volume cost savings) under a standardized, realistic building code, especially as the federal government is distancing itself more and more from subsidized housing. And the New England states also face an urgent need to designate sites for the disposal of low-level radioactive waste, making use of whatever political trade-offs are required. New England, a major producer of low-level radioactive waste, may soon find there is nowhere to put it, unless at prohibitive cost.

New England could obviously benefit from a more formal approach to regionalism, but to reach that next plateau will require that (1) a regional assembly or forum be established, where issues can be debated publicly and constituencies formed to support those issues; and (2) a political process be put in place which is capable of producing, where appropriate, regional legislation.

Assemblies have been proposed before. In 1974, economist Rudolph Hardy, speaking at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., proposed a New England Assembly with the power to conduct regionwide planning. In 1981, following the termination of the two New England federal commissions, Hardy again proposed an assembly at a special meeting of government, public, and private-industry officials held at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. His proposal failed to attract support. An even earlier proposal for a New England-type Tennessee Valley (TVA) authority was made by a regional planning committee at Yale University but also got nowhere.

Perhaps, using these failed proposals as a measurement, the soundest and safest approach would be to expand on machinery already in place by forming a New Eng-

land Council of Governments. The council could be an enlargement of the present Caucus of New England State Legislatures, formed in 1978, which is made up of those persons who hold the six legislative leadership positions in each New England state. In addition to the six legislative leaders from each state, additional legislators could be appointed on a per capita state basis so as to form a broadly representative regional body of eighty to one hundred members.

This expanded Council of Governments would consider proposals, in the form of legislation, put forward by the proposed public assembly (a nonlegislative body), by the Governors' Conference, and from the council's own initiatives. The council would sit in session, in rotation, at each of the six State Houses for a fixed number of days annually and would act on any proposed legislation. Bills that were approved would be sent to the individual legislatures for consideration, where their chance of passage would be greatly enhanced because of prior approval by the regional body representing the legislative leadership of all six states.

This process would not encroach on states' rights, and it would provide a heretofore nonexistent system of enacting regional legislation with greater speed and regionwide understanding, both public and political. And, just as important, it would provide a centerpiece where regional issues could be discussed and acted on. Furthermore, there is no question that a meeting of the region's legislative leadership, on a circuit-riding basis, would attract media attention, something sadly lacking up to this time in regional affairs.

Endorsing the concept of more active participation by the New England legislatures as a means to more effective regionalism, something he has long endorsed, Dr. James Howell commented that the sooner we understand the need for this participation, the sooner we're going to be able to assure the long-term vitality of the region.<sup>6</sup> Equally significant, however, would still be the need for a grassroots public assembly that could meet annually or biannually, also on a rotating basis, although at different times from the Council of Governments (legislatures). The Governors' Conference could maintain its present schedule of four meetings a year but perhaps hold one of its meetings in conjunction with the council in order to maximize and centralize discussion of proposed regional legislation.

In a conversation in August 1985 with Andrew Card, Jr., the president's White House assistant to the states, I asked him how the Reagan administration would react to a stronger regional presence. "We would encourage it," he said, although by "encourage" he was not suggesting a revival of the once federally funded regional commissions. Card, who, because of his liaison with the states, is in a better position than most to evaluate regionalism, says that the South has used the regional concept to greater advantage than any other part of the country, adding, however, that New England has one of the strongest cases for regionalism of all.<sup>7</sup>

Shouldn't that case be tried . . . now? It's time for the next step.

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## Notes

1. For more information on Mayor Jean Drapeau's hopes for three-hour fast rail between Montreal and New York, see Harold Faber's article in the *New York Times* on 4 December 1983, page 64.
2. *The Prospectus for the Commission on Higher Education and the Economy of New England* (Wenham, Mass.: New England Board of Higher Education, 1980), 18.

3. "Governor O'Neill Signs Bill Retaining Connecticut's Membership in the Compact," *Connection* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 1.
4. Dr. James M. Howell's comment on the importance of the New England regional academic health centers was made during an interview with the author in January 1986.
5. "Spotlight on the New England Regional Commission," report by the Spotlight Team of the *Boston Sunday Globe*, 8 October 1972, 1.
6. Author's interview with Dr. Howell, January 1986.
7. Andrew Card, Jr., conveyed his views on regionalism across the country in a conversation with the author on 30 August 1985 in Washington, D.C.

# My Life with the FBI

James Carroll

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It's like an agent flashing his credentials at you in the privacy of your bedroom. Those three stark letters loom threateningly, but not from a leather billfold. "FBI Warning! It is a federal crime to . . ." the message says, but it's coming from your own TV set, and this is the beginning of the VCR movie you brought home from your neighborhood video store. You just wanted to watch *Ghostbusters* or *Umbrellas of Cherbourg* or *Casablanca* maybe, but before you can (it's like being frisked at the airport on the way to your vacation) you have to be reminded that they are there somehow in that machine, watching you while you watch it. *And they know*—this is the feeling they want you to have and you have it for an instant despite yourself—*what you are doing!* VCRs are everywhere now and so, by God, after all these years, when we thought they'd forgotten us, is the FBI.

When I was a child, the FBI was everywhere in my world and I loved my world more for that. My first remembered experience of entertainment—one could even say of *story*—was listening on the radio in the late forties to "The FBI in Peace and War," and I can still hum its theme. My older brother Joe and I, and then Brian, too, when he came along, huddled together by the old Philco, riveted because those tales of gangbusters, spy catchers, and G-men evoked the world of our father, who was himself an FBI agent. He was rarely home by the time we went to bed, and so those radio programs filled that primordial need of ours to draw close to him at night before daring to close our eyes against the dark. With such protection, how could we be afraid? With a father engaged in such noble, dangerous, and important pursuits—saving lives and countries—how could our mere loneliness for him deflect the pride we felt? That radio program and another one called "This Is Your FBI," like the succession of television shows (Herbert Philbrick's "I Led Three Lives" and Efrem Zimbalist, Jr.'s "The FBI") and movies (*The House on 92nd Street*, *Walk a Crooked Mile*, *Experiment in Terror*, *Walk East on Beacon*) that would follow them over the next decade portrayed FBI agents as men of such competence and integrity, of such selflessness, that one could only think of them as secular saints, modern-day Knights Templar.

One is tempted now to scoff at such Bureau image making, at the naïveté of children and of a childish culture that had such a need for mythical figures. Joe, Brian, and I *wanted* to think of ourselves as sons of a god, and did. But I stop myself from scoffing. Yes, we've seen through the propaganda, and we can recite the litany of FBI abuses and failures, and we can reject the dichotomizing mind that divides

*James Carroll's most recent novels are Prince of Peace and the forthcoming Supply of Heroes; he is married to the novelist Alexandra Marshall and lives in Boston.*

people into good and bad, citizens and criminals, patriots and pinkos. J. Edgar Hoover's ghostwriter's most famous book was called *Masters of Deceit*, but the image of the FBI that Americans cherished was itself a masterful deception, as events that culminated in the social chaos of Vietnam and Watergate would reveal. Nevertheless, even now, in recalling the power of that first ideal, in which virtue was not the opposite of masculinity but the essence of it, I recognize that the man I still long to be is the one I first thought my father was.

In 1940, having earned his law degree at night while working days in the Chicago stockyards, my father joined the FBI. He was a crack agent and made a name for himself when he collared Chicago's Roger "Tough" Touhey, one of the last of the notorious Capone-era mobsters. By 1944, the year after I was born, he was in Washington as chief of kidnapping and bank robbery investigations for the entire Bureau. He became one of Hoover's trusted intimates and took on special duties as a Bureau troubleshooter. In that capacity he was loaned to the War Assets Administration, where he was director of security during the massive disposal of weapons and surplus goods after World War II. The division he established then—it was called Compliance Enforcement—became the security operation of the Government Services Administration and survives as one of three present agencies that my father founded.

In 1947 he returned to the FBI as inspector in charge of fraud investigation, but a few months later Hoover tapped him again for a special job. This time it was with the newly founded air force. Stuart Symington was the first secretary of the air force, and he wanted my father to establish a security counterespionage agency like the FBI within the air force itself. In order to implement this plan, my father was immediately commissioned brigadier general. At thirty-seven, he was the youngest general officer in America and certainly the only one in that postwar period who had not earned his rank in combat. The expectation was that, as before, he would establish the new agency and within a few years return to the Bureau, but it didn't work out that way. His temporary status as an air force general became permanent. The agency he founded for the air force was called the Office of Special Investigations, and he was its director for more than a decade. Years later, there would be a popular television show about an OSI agent known as "the Million Dollar Man."

After serving as inspector general of the air force, my father was selected by President Kennedy in 1961 to establish the Defense Intelligence Agency. The DIA was chartered to control all military intelligence activities, from satellites to attachés in embassies to spy ships like the *Pueblo*. It had its first test when my father's people discovered evidence of the Russian missile sites in Cuba. It was my father to whom Secretary McNamara deferred in his televised briefings during the crisis. The CIA had been discredited by the Bay of Pigs fiasco; the fledgling DIA was established by the "triumph" of the Cuban missile crisis. After that, my father rode high. He was reappointed four times, a record unmatched since, and he remained director of the DIA until he retired. But like everyone in the Pentagon in those years, his life of high purpose, patriotic zeal, and self-assured conviction was transformed by the nightmare of Vietnam.

As I came of age, one thing that always struck me about my father was that he never lost his first loyalty to the FBI. Even while he earned the respect of military men who had reason to resent him as an outsider, his best friends were always the agents he'd

served with in the Bureau. The FBI was an extraordinary fraternity of men who depended on each other not only for “backup” in their dangerous work and for friendship in their social lives, but also, and more important, for a mutually sustained worldview. At the center of that worldview, embodying it and bonding its agent-adherents together, was the figure of J. Edgar Hoover. Bureau men were absolutely devoted to him. Certainly my father regarded him as a great man; I remember him saying that Hoover was the greatest man he had ever known. My father could wax eloquent on Hoover’s particular achievement, the creation of an agency known for a rare incorruptibility. If the FBI’s political neutrality was mythical, the integrity of its agents was not, and even Hoover’s critics admired that. As the director of DIA, my father was Hoover’s equal on the U.S. Intelligence Advisory Board for a decade, but he never regarded Hoover as anything like a peer. Rather, he regarded him with reverence and, to my knowledge, never questioned Hoover’s judgment, even at the end of Hoover’s life, when he had become a Szep cartoon of himself. It remains a mystery to me how otherwise intelligent, critical officials could have so completely accepted the Hoover view, to take one example, that American dissenters were conscious agents of communism. Of course, that perception served a purpose, for if antiestablishment impulses all originated in Moscow, then the FBI’s central role in American life—as well as its place near the top of congressional budgets—was guaranteed.

But I am getting ahead of myself. Because of my father’s permanent connection to the Bureau, my brother Joe and I were able to get coveted summer jobs with the FBI when we finished high school. For three summers, beginning in 1960, I worked as a cryptanalyst’s aide in the Cryptanalysis-Translation Section of the FBI Laboratory. The dream Joe and I had shared as we huddled by the Philco years before came true when we were given our badges (plastic building passes, not gold shields) and began to move among the heroes in the world of secrets. I remember the awe I felt as I sat before stacked pages of computer printouts showing endless rows of numbers — encrypted messages to various Washington embassies which originated not only in Cuba and Russia but in England and West Germany. The Bureau systematically monitored diplomatic radio traffic of enemies and allies alike, and though several dozen skilled code breakers — agent eggheads — worked at it steadily, they never succeeded in making sense of those numbers; or if they did, they never told me. Not that the lack of results mattered. It was enough for me to touch those pages and do my primitive clerical analysis—count the fives in each row, say, and note the total in a marginal column my boss would study later. The cryptanalyst-agents, even those math-whiz intellectuals, periodically went on “black-bag jobs,” which were alluded to in whispers. Eventually I learned that the phrase referred to burglaries of embassies for the purpose of discovering cryptographic keys. But burglary was illegal, and it shocked me that agents would break the law, even in the name of—I’d never heard this justification before, but later I’d despair of ever hearing the end of it—national security. It was a sharp lesson when, to my naïf’s assertion that the ends don’t justify the means, an old hand replied, “If the ends don’t, nothing does.” Ironically, it was the exact rationale protesters would use in a few years to justify burglarizing draft boards.

My innate feeling that the FBI was not above the law, any law, was blunted by evident political reality: If Communists were not bound thus in the death struggle of the Cold War, how could our frontline defenders be? It wasn’t the law that would

protect us, but the decisions, judgment, courage, and wisdom of G-men.

But being inside the Bureau in those first three summers of the 1960s brought to light something else that undercut my ability to transfer my trust from the Constitution to the men sworn to uphold it. I saw up close the overbearing system of Bureau discipline which inhibited the men who submitted to it. Inside the FBI, Hoover was a petty tyrant who regulated the minutiae of every employee's life. I remember thinking, No wonder Dad stayed in the air force. During one of my summer stints for the Bureau, a clerk wore a red vest with shiny brass buttons to work one day. He was unlucky enough to be in the elevator when the Director stepped on. Hoover broke his usual silence with underlings to ask what office the man worked in. When the waistcoated clerk returned to his desk, his supervisor was waiting there to fire him for his inappropriate attire.

Agents were as intimidated as clerks. I was shocked, for example, at the routine dishonesty with which they falsified their sign-in entries on reporting to work. I didn't appreciate then that they were unreasonably required to compile impossible quotas of "voluntary overtime." I was embarrassed for agents when I saw them sneak off for coffee as their supervisor stepped out of his guard-post-like glass cubicle for a moment. I watched agents grow pale as they exchanged stories of the Director's most recent punitive transfer of some unlucky offender. Those men who would willingly risk their lives to break into the embassies of our enemies feared Hoover the way adolescents like me feared our fathers. I understood that their worst nightmare—being caught in the code room, say, of the Soviet Mission up Sixteenth Street from the White House—represented at bottom the dread not of death or ignominious imprisonment for an officially denied crime, but of embarrassing the Bureau and drawing down the wrath of J. Edgar Hoover.

Yet their loyalty to him was absolute. By my third summer, Hoover's conflict with the U.S. attorney general was bitter. For the first time since his appointment in 1924, the Director was dealing with a superior who thought he was just that. The agents I knew seemed to take their cue from Hoover, and they quickly professed to hate the man who humiliated the Director by, for example, "feminizing" the austere courtyard that separated the FBI wing of the Justice Department Building from the AG's wing with cheery umbrella-tables and an employee snack bar. Hoover ordered the tables removed and instantly they were. Bureau people gasped the next day when the tables reappeared; this was a combat of the gods. And something went out of our universe when the tables remained.

The attorney general was Robert Kennedy, and it wasn't only on trivial issues like umbrellas in the courtyard that he challenged Hoover. I remember the thrill it was to be excused from work one morning (it was like getting out of school) to go over into the "Justice" side of the building, into the imposing auditorium where the attorney general was to speak to the Department's summer interns. Those of us who were from the Bureau—not *interns* but *employees*—felt like an elite because we knew that FBI men were on the front line of the two great battles—against Communists and mobsters—which had made Bobby Kennedy famous, first with McCarthy, then with Kefauver. Imagine my surprise when Kennedy, looking so young, sounding so impassioned—the very opposite of our Hoover—gave a rousing speech that beseeched us to dedicate ourselves to the most important cause in America: not the routing of Gus Hall or Jimmy Hoffa, but the struggle for civil rights, the civil rights of "colored people"! It was a powerful, moving statement of his intention to put

Justice on the side of justice, and I was profoundly affected by it. After all those years of thinking I knew who the bad guys were, I returned to the Bureau side of the building wondering. Even I understood at once that when Kennedy attacked, implicitly, the institutions which prevented black Americans from gaining access to full equality, one of them was my own beloved and all-white FBI. My movement away from the world and worldview to which I was born and toward an eventual alliance first with civil rights activists, then with radicals, draft resisters, fugitives, and outlaws, began in the formal auditorium of the very agency that, by decade's end, would be leading the charge against them.

At the end of that summer, Bobby Kennedy made good on his commitment and sent federal marshals to Mississippi to escort James Meredith into Ole Miss. And I sensed, rightly I think, that he could not have sent FBI agents, the more appropriate escorts, because he couldn't trust Hoover on the issue. To Hoover, blacks like Meredith and King who demanded justice were causes of the trouble, not victims of it. Even I knew that Hoover was wrong. When I finished my time at the Bureau that summer to begin training for the Roman Catholic priesthood—to be an agent, but without a gun—I received a letter from Hoover wishing me well. Though I knew such letters were mere formalities, that their signatures were forged (by secretaries or by machines, we never knew which), and though I'd rejected the Director's despotic methods and begun to abhor his racial and cultural biases, I was thrilled to receive his letter. And it's like confession to say that I still have it.

By the end of that typhoon of decades, I was a Catholic priest actively involved in the antiwar movement and my brother Brian was an FBI agent charged with tracking down resisters. The young men whom I helped to avoid the draft and even to flee to Canada he was sworn to pursue and capture. By the early seventies, with the war still not ended, even timid draft counselors like me had begun committing acts of civil disobedience and going to jail for it. You don't have to be a psychiatrist to appreciate what it meant for me to be arrested by OSI men at an air force base (my father was by then a three-star general in charge of all military intelligence for Vietnam) or in the main rotunda of the U.S. Capitol where, it's no exaggeration to say, I'd *worshipped* as a boy.

How far I had come from my youthful ideal, in which Catholic priests and FBI agents occupied similar positions of mythical power, became all too obvious when a pair of agents made one of their famous visits to my office at Boston University, where I was the Catholic chaplain. I wanted to tell them all that we had in common, but I said nothing. They were two of the dozens of agents searching for members of the Catholic peace movement who had raided draft boards to protest the war in Vietnam. I had no direct involvement in the draft board raids or the underground network that hid the fugitives, but it flattered me that the FBI would think I might have. Finally, exasperated by my refusal to answer their questions, one of the agents, a Jesuit-trained Irish Catholic who had no category for Catholic resisters, especially priests and nuns, blurted the question, "What kinds of creatures are they who would turn against their country like this?"

"We're human beings," I answered.

My greatest fear in those years was that I would find myself in direct conflict with my brother Brian. Initially I thought it wouldn't happen because while I was in Boston, he was assigned to the FBI Field Office in Philadelphia. But then, on March

8, 1971, something completely unexpected occurred. Members of the Catholic left, retaliating for the FBI harassment that had led to the infamous trial in Harrisburg of "Philip Berrigan and seven others," as the press always dubbed it, burglarized the FBI Resident Agency in Media, Pennsylvania. They called themselves the Citizens' Commission to Investigate the FBI, and they set about at once to publish the various stolen documents. It was the first time FBI files had ever been made available without authorization. The image of a rogue agency manipulating, infiltrating, and interfering not only with militant groups but with mainstream, even innocuous organizations like the phone company and the Boy Scouts was given substance by memos and reports which described such tactics in detail. For the first time in its history, the FBI was made to seem to the public at large simultaneously sinister and ridiculous.

And J. Edgar Hoover was not pleased. He suspended the head of the Media office without pay and launched a national manhunt with his best agents to find those responsible for what in Bureau argot was immediately dubbed MEDBURG. A few Catholic pacifists had done what no gangster and no KGB operative had ever done before, and, by God, the Director wanted them!

Despite enjoying the spectacle from the sidelines—after all those years, the red-vested clerk was being avenged—I felt a certain pity for the Bureau and a kind of grief for my own innocence. When I visited my brother Brian that spring, I was relieved that we were able to lay aside the political and ideological tensions that might have made our encounter impossibly awkward. We laughed at the irony—and the accident—of our being on opposite sides, and we were both grateful that the peace wars hadn't ruined our friendship. I was relaxed about Media because I'd had nothing to do with it, though I'd heard rumors that various acquaintances of mine were involved. No one in the Bureau was relaxed about it though, not even Brian.

When the Bureau found it couldn't prove that the Catholics had pulled off the Media raid, it did the next best thing. Using the services of an agent-provocateur named Robert Hardy, the FBI set up some of the Media suspects, as well as numerous others, in a new burglary, a draft-board raid at the Federal Building in Camden, New Jersey, across the river from Philadelphia. That action took place one night in August 1971, and several good friends of mine from Boston were involved in it. Because Hardy had the Bureau tipped off from the start, dozens of agents, including Brian, had no trouble breaking in on the raid, shoving the snouts of their shotguns under the chins of unarmed Catholic flower children, and arresting what turned out to be the "Camden 28." Brian told me later that he and his colleagues had waited to spring their trap in the embalming room of a mortuary across the street. But that was far from the worst insult to the Bureau's dignity, for when the case against the twenty-eight came to trial—I was there as a character witness for several defendants—the judge threw it out and lectured the FBI on the abuses of entrapment. Hoover was dead by then, and so was our easy belief in America.

Things are different now, of course. After a period in which the most outrageous suspicions of wild-eyed radicals seemed to prove true—one FBI Director was disgraced by Watergate and another was investigated by his own agents for misusing government property—the Bureau seems back on an even keel. But if the FBI isn't the sinister monolith of Hoover's critics, neither is it the bastion of American invincibility some of us once revered. Hispanics, blacks, and women have been recruited as agents, but the new equality became complete in 1985 when the first

woman agent was killed. In a tragedy that could never have been written into the script of the radio show in the forties, she was shot accidentally by her fellow agents as they were trying to stop a bank robbery.

The current Director, William H. Webster, has so successfully restored the prestige of his own office that he is widely considered a candidate for appointment to the Supreme Court, but the agency as a whole has never really recovered its earlier luster. The rigid hold Hoover had over his agents has been eased, but in recent years the inconceivable became a reality when agents were brought to trial for graft and even for espionage.

The range of FBI concerns has been extended from the relatively easy and statistically satisfying pursuit of car thieves and Communists to the problems of white collar crime and drug enforcement. But juries in the Abscam and DeLorean cases wondered if the fine line between pursuit and entrapment wasn't still getting crossed. The aggressive dogging of organized crime figures like the Angiulos in Boston and the Gambinos in New York makes it seem that the old gang-busting FBI is back, but there's reason to think that even the FBI's much-publicized war on drug trafficking (conducted with the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Secret Service, and U.S. Customs) has backfired. Now the risk of being caught is so much greater than it used to be that drug importers have begun trading in the smallest, most easily concealed, and most profitable substance available. Thus, thanks in part to the FBI, the drug of choice in America is no longer marijuana but the far more deadly cocaine. Everything, in other words, seems more complicated now, and the Bureau's solutions, like the black-bag jobs of earlier days, still have a way of becoming problems.

My brother Brian, meanwhile, has by now become a seasoned agent and a respected member of the faculty at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia. Among other things, he helps prepare agents to get terrorists off our airplanes without killing us. And who isn't grateful for that? I have learned to appreciate his dedication, his savvy intelligence, and his courage, and he, more than any mellowing of my left-leaning criticism, is what enables me to think well of the FBI today. And a second look at the Bureau is instructive. One has only to compare it to other police agencies or to the like organizations of other nations to feel grateful for the FBI. One has only to meet today's young agents—through Brian, I've met many of them—to realize that Bureau standards remain impressively high.

But even agents from my time can impress. My brother helped me reestablish a friendship with one of them. He was a clerk with me in the Cryptanalysis Section twenty-five years ago. Now he is on the Organized Crime Squad in Boston—a worldly-wise agent who has seen it all. He embraced the old Bureau when I first did, but is enough a part of the new to be proud that his wife of many years has become an agent now too. Though the decades took us far apart and could easily have made us antagonists, they did not undermine the rare affection that we shared as young men.

There was one sudden moment in the mid-seventies when my pride in my father's early career and in my brother's matching it and when my fondness for FBI friends and nostalgia for my own initiation into Bureau secrets all came back, in a kind of ambush of feeling. It happened when I was briefly a volunteer bus monitor in Boston during the 1975 school busing crisis. My job was simply to be an adult presence, supportive of the bused children and prepared to report abuses to the court. On the first morning of school, when I boarded a bus that was half full of black boys and

girls about to run the gauntlet into all-white South Boston—the resisters now were racists—one of the boys said, “You’re an FBI man, right?” I sensed his awe and recognized it as what I’d felt when I was his age. I asked him why he thought so. He eyed my plastic credential pinned to my lapel—like my building pass from years before—and replied, “Because the FBI are the only white folks on our side.” And I thought of the day in the Justice Department auditorium when Bobby Kennedy changed my mind about America.

I am a novelist now, not a priest, and my view tends to be less dichotomized than it was, less prone to divide the world into saints and sinners. It’s a function perhaps only of middle age, only, that is, of having now and then seen the saints and sinners switch places and having found oneself at home as much on one side as on the other. Still, as a writer, the ever-absolute FBI is a vein I mine repeatedly. Agents feature somehow in all five of the novels I’ve published, sometimes as villains and sometimes as heroes, but mostly, I hope—as I said to the agents who quizzed me at B.U.—as human beings. Among the looming figures from our culture, only priests feature more than agents in the stories I write, and they tend to be my heroes and villains, too. Priests and agents, even if we’ve left behind the old piety and a naive notion of American innocence, remain figures of connotation for us because—however tough these years have made us, however wise, however disenchanting—the ideas and ideals priests and agents first embodied and which they imperfectly represent today remain the ideas and ideals we yearn to lay claim on once again.

# Boston School Desegregation:

# The Fallowness of Common Ground

*Robert A. Dentler*

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*This essay scrutinizes the book by J. Anthony Lukas, Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families, to assess whether it presents a valid and reliable account of the issues, people, and events it chronicles. The substantive core of the book is shown to be the politics of Boston public school desegregation. The parts played by the three families in this event are dramatically portrayed but cannot be corroborated and are not interpreted. The parts played by five major policy leaders, when tested against other evidence, are found to be distorted, questionable legends woven in order to argue that four of the five leaders made flawed decisions that plunged Boston into violence. Lukas's docudramatic method of reporting works to cloak the ignorance, fear, and hostility of the minority of citizens in the white enclaves of Boston who initiated racial violence in the robe of civic innocence.*

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*Common Ground*, by J. Anthony Lukas, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and former reporter for the *New York Times*, was published by Alfred A. Knopf and released in September 1985 to become a best seller in the nonfiction book trade in less than a month. Excerpts from its 659 pages were printed in advance in the *Atlantic*, the *Boston Observer*, and the *Washington Monthly*. Within a week of its release, other sections were published on the Op-Ed pages of the *Boston Globe* and the *New York Times*. A dozen reviews appeared almost simultaneously with its release to bookstores, and all of them contained praise. In his advance appraisal, David Halberstam wrote, "This is a bittersweet book on the end of an American dream." A month after publication, the Kennedy Foundation sponsored an eleven-member panel of discussants, most of whom spoke favorably about *Common Ground* following a speech by Lukas before a large audience assembled in the John F. Kennedy Library.

Lukas began work on what David McClintick termed his masterpiece nearly ten years ago. He counts it as seven years of work in his acknowledgments, but perhaps Lukas took three years off altogether in the course of the decade that has passed since he began the book. Besides the support he received through an advance from Knopf, Lukas was aided by a Guggenheim fellowship, a Harvard fellowship, and lectureships and adjunct professorships at Harvard and at Boston University. *Common Ground* is

intended as a major work in journalistic reporting. In his advance praise, Joe McGinniss called it "a monumental achievement; a profoundly significant book." Such a book merits close scrutiny—the aim of this essay.

My interest in *Common Ground* is professional as well as scholarly. Before coming to Boston in 1972 as dean of education at Boston University, I had worked on twelve northern school desegregation cases, and before joining Judge W. Arthur Garrity, Jr., in January 1975 as one of two experts he appointed to help plan and oversee his court orders, I had consulted with Mayor Kevin White, Governor Francis Sargent, and State Education Commissioner Gregory Anrig, independently of the court. Anthony Lukas sought me out as a source in 1976, and I spent many hours answering his questions. The policy issue for me, therefore, is whether *Common Ground* provides an accurate account of the turbulent decade it aspires to chronicle.

### The Chairwoman

It is difficult to understand initially what *Common Ground* is about. Lukas provides no introduction or preface and no index by which to scan its concrete topics, and the flow of his prose is unimpeded by citations from sources of evidence. His two-paragraph Author's Note speaks of capturing "the realities of urban America, when seen through the lives of actual city dwellers." This and the subtitle, *A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families*, bring to mind John Gunther's books about the great cities of the world, and the Lanny Budd novels of Upton Sinclair as well as his two-volume novel, *Boston*. To the social scientist, they bring back memories of such books as *The London Poor*, *The Shame of the Cities*, *Street Corner Society*, *The Black Metropolis*, and even Oscar Lewis's *Five Families*.

The three families of the Divers, Twymons, and McGoffs are introduced so straightforwardly that by the time the reader has moved a fifth of the way into *Common Ground*, the point of the book appears to be the narrated story of three households whose youngest members inhabited Boston during the years 1968 to 1978. Chapter 9, "The Chairwoman," interrupts that impression and presents instead a profile of the life and times of Louise Day Hicks. We meet Mrs. Hicks in the midst of a June 1966 graduation ceremony at a junior high school in Roxbury where, as chairwoman of the Boston School Committee, she was invited to give the commencement address. As a result of a confrontation led by the Reverend Virgil Wood, Boston representative of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Mrs. Hicks was forced to flee the platform and the school. A short way into this chapter, the reader perceives that Lukas's primary focus on race relations has been foreshadowed throughout his opening chapters on the three families. The shadows are so embedded in the chronicle of the times of the Kennedys, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the civil rights revolution, however, that when first encountered they are but a small part of what each family is experiencing. It is in the chapter on Louise Day Hicks that the background of civil rights becomes the foreground of the book.

What was noteworthy about Mrs. Hicks's law school days at Boston University, Lukas assures us, was her participation in a study group composed of "a Jewish girl" and "a black" girl. This trio of close friends later came to include "an Italian girl," "a Greek girl," and two black men; the five other black students from the class of 1955 were occasional participants. When Mrs. Hicks decided in 1961 to run for a seat on the Boston School Committee, Lukas tells us, her brothers opposed her decision; he

also asserts that “for a politically ambitious woman, a seat on the School Committee was the obvious office to seek.” He does not explore the possibility that Mrs. Hicks, who held an education degree and a teaching certificate and who had served as a classroom teacher before entering law school, may have been motivated by a strong professional interest in public education.

There is little more to her biography, for half of the chapter on the chairwoman is devoted to her immersion in the issue of racial segregation in the public schools of Boston, an issue raised by the local chapter of the NAACP in 1963, her second year in office and her first year as chairwoman. For Lukas, the question is what motivated Mrs. Hicks to become the spokesperson for resistance to the demands of black parents for equal educational opportunity for their children. “Indeed, in retrospect, Louise seems to have acted less like a bigot than a politician on the make,” he writes, giving the reader only these two choices. She “discovered that, while her intransigence brought denunciations from blacks and liberals, it gained still greater support in white working-class neighborhoods.” How one answers the question of motive matters, because the answer fixes the threads of interpretation of racial policy and conflict woven throughout *Common Ground*. It is conceivable, for instance, that Louise Day Hicks was unprepared for the emergence of the segregation issue in Boston, that she knew too little at first to understand the racial injustices of school-policy operations, and that she believed her city was different from the cities of the Deep South. It is equally imaginable that she initially believed she was voicing the views of the white electorate and that their racial fears and ignorance gradually offered her margins of support she never dreamed of mobilizing when she first ran for office.

Social and political demography as well as intergroup history get short shrift from Lukas. Notes on the social facts about Boston are inserted into every chapter, but these are seldom expanded upon or integrated into interpretation; indeed, they are subordinated to the dramaturgy of personal motives. Boston’s black residents made up less than 20 percent of the city in 1960, for example. Politicians were elected at large, and black voters did not make up an organized political subcommunity of the city. Four of the five members of the Boston School Committee were elected in 1961 and 1963 by white-dominated ward organizations whose members were patronized in turn by committee members. Three members struggled to establish themselves to the right of Louise Day Hicks on the race issue, and the issue cost Arthur Gartland, the only moderate member, his seat. The choice before Louise Day Hicks from 1963 to 1966, then, was not between racial bigotry, as an act of personal conviction, and the path of political expediency: the choice for four committee members, including Hicks, was among degrees of denial concerning the facts of segregation.

At the time, there were few school committees or boards of education in the urban Northeast that were behaving differently. There were a few school superintendents, some groups of parents, and beleaguered moderates on boards who said that the *Brown* decision of 1954<sup>1</sup> would come to apply to all parts of the nation. Under pressure from the New York Board of Regents, for example, the city of White Plains desegregated its one identifiably black public school in 1964 by converting it into a community center. The winds of integration gusted across the cities and largest suburbs of Pennsylvania, New York, and Connecticut in those years. A handful of northern cities and suburbs undertook steps toward partial desegregation from 1963

to 1968, but white resistance was so deep in each year that some civil rights leaders turned away from this goal and embraced community control instead. As the 1960s drew to a close, desegregationists could point with pride to White Plains, Berkeley, Evanston, and Englewood, New Jersey, but no big-city systems had as yet reformed their racially dual schools.

Nothing distinguished Boston less in 1964 on this issue than the intransigence of Louise Day Hicks. There were three or more board members like her on every city school board from Santa Barbara to Providence in that year. Neither Mrs. Hicks nor Boston was even the northernmost case: that distinction went to Minneapolis, where the dispute went to federal court at the close of the 1960s. The raising of the segregation issue in 1963 and the manner of white reactions to it over the five years that followed differed from the same phenomena in dozens of other cities only in regard to timing. The debate in Boston was comparatively belated, and it was insular in scope, failing to draw heavily on the experience of other urban school systems.

In his chapter on Louise Day Hicks, Lukas also develops his assumptions about the Massachusetts Racial Imbalance Act. He characterizes it as the product of "moral fervor" engendered by the "outrages of Selma . . . [and] Martin Luther King's impassioned address on the Boston Common." The coalition of suburban and rural legislators who passed it, Lukas claims, were happy to point a finger at the cities. "Few paused to wonder whether the moral imperatives of the Southern civil rights struggle could be applied mechanically to a Northern city where segregation had developed differently," Lukas writes, but he does not document, let alone identify, the alleged difference.

Lukas also asserts that the authors of the Racial Imbalance Act did not pause to ask "whether quality education might not be possible in a predominantly black school." In fact, that question was debated in the course of framing the law. The question had also been the topic of continual research, conferencing, and experimentation among educators and social scientists since the *Brown* decision, and it had been treated often in the newspapers of the day. What is more, no legislation passed in Massachusetts without a coalition among suburban and rural legislators. Racial segregation was an urban issue raised by black parents who were concentrated in the cities of the state. Their leaders took it to the legislature. And there was nothing mechanical about the new law. It simply adopted the rule of thumb that identified public schools enrolling more than 50 percent nonwhite students as racially imbalanced, a rule followed in other parts of the country at that time. This definition had drawbacks, but mechanicalism and the question of quality education in predominantly black schools were not among them.

There is but one notable difference between southern and northern school segregation, and that is in the degree of explicitness. State laws prohibiting racially mixed schools in the South seemed important in 1954, but the importance diminished with every passing year as civil rights claimants tested the forms of racism common to social institutions in every region of the United States. One of those forms had been dealt with in the *Brown* decision: the argument that racially isolated, racially identifiable black schools could be as effective educationally as racially inclusive schools. This question was explored and refuted in the South long before it made its way north. And it was in the South that segregationists had perfected the critique of desegregation remedies as mechanical and therefore harmful.

Thus, the chapter entitled “The Chairwoman” formulates the central subject of *Common Ground*, and its interpretations guide Lukas into and through the terrain of that subject, which is court-ordered school desegregation in Boston. Contrary to his interpretations, Boston was never on the leading edge of that subject nationally. The choice of Louise Day Hicks between advocating reforms consistent with the *Brown* decision and resisting those reforms was not, as Lukas suggests, a fateful one for Boston or the nation. Nor did her intransigence set into motion an evolving pattern of rising white resistance to racial injustice in Boston. There were not ten elected officials in any post from mayor to city councilman who were less resistant at the time, and Boston politicians were carried into and out of office in those years on waves of white fear and ignorance. Lukas’s interpretation that the state legislature, the State Board of Education, and later the state and federal courts failed to develop rational policies fitted to northern conditions discloses the flawed quality of his social history.

Lukas truncates the political history of school desegregation, even though it is his central subject. He does not trace its evolving features as they moved northward from Baltimore to New York City in the decade after 1954. He says of this evolution, “When the legislature passed the Racial Imbalance Act on August 16, 1965, Massachusetts became the first state in the Union—and to date the only one—to outlaw *de facto* segregation in its public schools.” That act was unique only technically, however, and it was based on policy commitments made earlier in other states and localities. Progress in reform was slow, to be sure, but it came earlier and faster in New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and California than it did in Massachusetts. The call for racial justice in Boston’s public schools was neither novel nor ahead of its time, and what distinguished white public reactions in Boston was the uniformity, not the substance or the intransigence, of early maneuvers of resistance and avoidance by white politicians.

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### The Judge

Federal District Judge W. Arthur Garrity, Jr., is the second of five public leaders profiled in *Common Ground*. Chapter 14, “The Judge,” follows the pattern set in the chapter on Louise Day Hicks. It narrates his family history, which is used to explain his motives and predispositions through a device Lukas calls the collective memory drawn from ancestral legends, a sort of homemade variation on the theme of the collective unconscious. It also gives a sketch of his career and his appointment to the bench. While it provides a conjectural account of how and why Judge Garrity took the actions he did in regard to Boston school segregation, the chapter is also a vehicle for discourses on federal and state law, civil procedure, and the content of the court’s remedial orders. And just as Louise Day Hicks is given a choice by Lukas between embracing or rejecting racial injustice, so Judge Garrity is pictured as choosing between moderate compromise and rigid adherence to the prescriptions of the U.S. Supreme Court.

There is another parallel: Mrs. Hicks’s moving toward public leadership is depicted as a kind of surprising emergence in her life history, whereas Judge Garrity’s moving toward a federal judgeship is described as a kind of fluke. We do not learn that W. Arthur Garrity, Sr., served as a U.S. commissioner, for example. Garrity’s clerkship under Federal Judge Francis Ford is mentioned not as an indicative career

commitment but as a time when Judge Ford "became almost a second father to the young lawyer." Garrity's appointment as U.S. attorney for Massachusetts is not connected to his achievements during earlier service as an assistant U.S. attorney but is viewed exclusively as a by-product of his campaign services for John F. Kennedy.

Nor are those campaign services presented as if they grew up out of political conviction and professional interest. Lukas tells us that they came about as a kind of side play from social involvement in a clique called the Mystery Nighters: "The Mystery Nighters were a classic John Kennedy crowd. . . . So it was hardly surprising that Arthur Garrity should join the Kennedy camp, working hard for Jack in the 1952 senatorial campaign." Lukas identifies the founder of the Mystery Nighters as Eve Carey, daughter of the chairman of American Airlines. He does not get the kinship right. It is Mrs. Carey's brother, Albert Casey, who became chairman of American Airlines. More to the point, Barbara and Arthur Garrity never attended the parties given by the Mystery Nighters; the clique did not ever specialize in St. Patrick's Day revels, as Lukas claims; and it was not the source or context for Arthur Garrity's decision to join the political campaigns for John F. Kennedy.

Each of the five public figures Lukas profiles is presented as a kind of demigod. True to the Greek tradition, each is portrayed as having been elevated from the ordinary by invisible acts of fortune, not by hard work and merit. Arthur Garrity's work in the Kennedy campaign is thus questioned for its sincerity: "To this day, Garrity insists that he had no ulterior motives in these labors." In reviewing the career of an attorney who works on public election campaigns, how shall one interpret the idea of "ulterior motives"?

Arthur Garrity's legal workmanship did not produce his appointment as U.S. attorney either, says Lukas; rather, it stemmed from the ulterior motives of others. He claims that the procedure adhered to for ordinary candidates for the post was bypassed: "Garrity's appointment was rushed through the Senate Judiciary Committee, past an unsuspecting Senate, and sped to the White House for the President's signature. The following morning, the commission was put on a plane for Boston."<sup>2</sup> Thus do senior demigods—in this tale, John and Robert together—conspire to lift mortals into their midst.

Nor, for Lukas, is Arthur Garrity's legal workmanship sufficient to account for his later elevation to the federal judgeship. Garrity was "amply qualified," but he became a judge because of a foiled effort by Edward Kennedy to appoint someone else. Arthur Garrity filled in when a seamy scheme to pay off a political hack went awry.

In summing up Judge Garrity's performance on the bench, Lukas does not inform us about the quality of his justice or mercy—only that he soon revealed himself to be a puritan, obsessed by "a pathological fear of losing control." Earlier, Lukas writes that what was special about Arthur Garrity's education at Holy Cross College was his immersion in Thomistic philosophy. In an effort to account for a mind shaped by Thomistic Catholicism yet characterized by the obsessions of an English Puritan, Lukas suggests only that these incredible contradictions roiled about inside Judge Garrity's psyche.

Again, consistent with Greek drama, Lukas notes that the god of chance awarded the case of *Morgan v. Hennigan*<sup>3</sup> to Judge Garrity. That all cases are randomly awarded is acknowledged, but Lukas tries to give this particular event the overlay of a strange fate. By attributing a quotation to the chief judge of the district court, Lukas remarks indirectly on the irony of the schools case being placed in the hands of

an Irish Catholic. We are not given the odds behind this event—we do not learn how many of the judicial peers were Irish Catholics.

The chapter on Judge Garrity includes a capsule history of Supreme Court desegregation decisions from 1954 to 1974, and on this stands the policy premise of *Common Ground*. “By then, the line between *de facto* and *de jure* segregation had become so fine as to be almost indistinguishable to the layman’s eye. . . . But others . . . thought it a distinction worth preserving: surely, a free society ought to defend the right of its citizens to make genuinely private choices, no matter how reprehensible. If government could abolish purely voluntary school segregation . . . then what was to prevent it from requiring a private citizen to accept Irish, black, or Portuguese guests at his dinner table?” Thus, the constitutional rights of private citizens are pitted against the wrongs of “voluntary” racial discrimination. The wall erected to prevent this had been eroded during twenty years of Supreme Court decisions, and Judge Garrity was chosen by fate to go into the resulting breach.

The reader gets but a single sentence of quotation from the liability opinion given by Judge Garrity in *Morgan v. Hennigan*. It is the sentence which concludes that the Boston School Committee “knowingly carried out a systematic program of segregation affecting all of the city’s students, teachers and school facilities and . . . intentionally brought about and maintained a dual school system.” Although this is the heart of the matter in *Common Ground*, the reader receives none of the facts on which this conclusion was based. Nor do we learn much about the correctness of the conclusion, only that Thomas Atkins of the NAACP thought highly of it and that the court of appeals upheld it.

The tragedy enacted by Judge Garrity, Lukas assures us, lay not in the finding of liability but in the remedies adopted to right those wrongs. Unidentified critics are alleged to have said the judge wasted his energies on the liability opinion when he should have spent them on the search for a remedy. Lukas fails to note that in school desegregation disputes, it is the defendant who must fashion the first remedial proposal and that it was in Boston that the School Committee refused to do just that.

The Phase I remedial plan for 1974–75 is depicted as a disastrous, vindictive proposal intended to harm the parents and students of South Boston—or, alternatively, as a drafting error in mechanical drawing by Charles Glenn, director of the state Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity. Two legends are narrated. One is that Glenn’s plan mistakenly linked South Boston High School with Roxbury High School. Lukas quotes Harvard Law Professor Louis Jaffe, who warned early in 1973 that South Boston’s “people are intensely hostile to blacks. . . . I conclude, therefore, that this part of the plan should be restudied.” A better plan would, for this reason, have sent South Boston’s students somewhere else, Lukas claims, but the State Board of Education rejected Jaffe’s warning.

Neither this nor any other feature of the Phase I remedial plan “caused” the violent reactions that attended its implementation. Black students and faculty at Roxbury High School, the facility nearest South Boston and one that South Boston girls had attended across the many years when it functioned as Girls’ Trade High School, accepted the incoming white students peacefully. South Boston High School became the staging area for violent resistance to the Phase I plan, a resistance which then spread to a few other schools. The entry of black students into South Boston High under any plan would have triggered a violent explosion of white racism in 1974, a point that Lukas does not make.

The second legend narrated by Lukas is that Judge Garrity ordered the Phase I plan into place because he had not studied it and because he had nothing else to adopt: "With barely three months left before the state plan was scheduled to go into effect, the judge felt he had no recourse but to adopt that plan as his first-stage remedy . . . while he began devising a permanent remedy." In fact, Judge Garrity had several alternatives. He could have delayed a remedy until January or September 1975. He could have revised parts of the Glenn plan. He could have required the School Committee to file an immediate proposal of their own, as was done within eighteen days in the case of every school district in Mississippi. The options closed to him were to do nothing; to adopt a gradual reform such as integrating one grade level a year; to revert to an open enrollment plan (already adopted by Boston and used to further segregation); and to adopt a metropolitan consolidation plan. He adopted the Glenn plan as temporary because it had been endorsed by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts; because it affected only four in every ten schools and was thus milder than most federal court remedies; and above all because by so doing, he could give the Boston School Committee a chance to demonstrate an affirmative commitment to a permanent proposal of their own devising. The Glenn plan was implemented with negligible tension or conflict in seventy-five of the eighty schools it affected, and many of the problems associated with it stemmed from Boston School Department failures in guiding its implementation.

The tragedies narrated in *Common Ground* arose, according to Lukas, from the juxtaposition of hidden flaws in individual character and events that conspired against fulfillment of what would be best for ordinary people. The book's chronicle relies therefore on the selection of events which seem best suited to express the adverse twists of fate. For example, Lukas writes that Judge Garrity began to devise his own permanent remedy long before one was due from the School Committee. This is simply not true. He also reports that Garrity's first two choices for the role of court expert were Thomas Pettigrew and Paul Ylvisaker, but "both turned him down." In fact, Judge Garrity never conferred with Pettigrew, and in his meeting with Ylvisaker, he never broached the subject.

Edward McCormack is featured by Lukas as one of the four masters appointed by Judge Garrity to make findings of fact and to recommend courses of remedial action. McCormack, according to *Common Ground*, developed a compromise plan early in 1975 that would have brought peace as well as racial justice to Boston. The other three masters are mentioned only once, although two of them, Charles Willie and Francis Keppel, had deep expertise in desegregation, while McCormack had never dealt educationally or legally with the issue. "Although the judge had adopted . . . a 'team' approach, Eddie McCormack was clearly first among equals, the team's unofficial captain." In fact, the presiding master was Jacob J. Spiegel; and while McCormack was the most dominating as well as the most creative personality on the team, he was not the captain. He did not create the elements of the masters' proposal; did not appraise its educational consequences; did not do the legal or demographic research on which it was based; and did not investigate the prospects for federal aid. These and other vital tasks were carried out by other team members. McCormack, meanwhile, specialized in testing a wide range of interest groups and organizations in order to assess and cultivate their support for the proposal, and he set the pace of the planning effort.

According to Lukas, McCormack created the Masters' Plan in the course of

private negotiations with leaders from all parts of Boston. The result was a “skillful balancing of the constitutional requirement for racial integration with the craving of many parents for neighborhood autonomy. Moreover, Eddie McCormack had woven a powerful mystique around the plan. It seemed to promise both justice and order, an attractive combination to the afflicted city. That expectation mobilized a broad middle ground behind the plan.” It is in this statement that readers find one of the keys to the title of the book. McCormack, the brilliant master of the art of the possible, says Lukas, drew a map of the middle ground where peace would have prevailed over racial warfare, had Judge Garrity not succumbed to pressure and spoiled the map by revising it. It was this fateful error, Lukas claims, which unleashed the second wave of furies in Boston in 1975 and 1976.

But the errors in Lukas’s reconstruction of these events are so great as to obscure what actually occurred after the masters retired from the case on April 2, 1975, six weeks after they had entered it. They are such serious errors as to render *Common Ground* suspect as a chronicle of the chief subject it aspires to analyze.

Just a few of the mistakes can be noted here. One of the gravest is the statement that Judge Garrity revised the Masters’ Plan by increasing the number of students to be bused from 14,900 to 25,000. The actual estimate by the masters was 18,900, but they tucked some 4,000 of these into an appendix as magnet school riders and, hence, “voluntary” transportees. Judge Garrity put the two types of riders together and added those to be transported for reasons of traffic safety. He also gave parents an opportunity to advise on busing plans, with the result that many lobbied successfully to add bus transportation for their children. The number bused in September 1975 thus was about 24,000.

Lukas also neglects the record of events in court. Several weeks after the masters retired, the Boston School Department, black plaintiffs, and the State Board of Education all *repudiated* the enrollment data on which the Masters’ Plan was based, including that plan’s estimates of numbers of students to be bused. More accurate data were supplied in response to a later court order, but the impact of invalid information on the dispute over a remedy was enormous at this time.

Contrary to the chronicle in *Common Ground*, all of the substantive features of the Masters’ Plan were retained by the court. These included citywide cross-busing, with the exception of East Boston; magnet schools in abundance; guidelines for community school districts, which consisted of clusters of facilities falling within firmly bounded but enlarged subcommunities; the pairing of schools with businesses, colleges and universities, and cultural agencies; uniform grade structures; and the closing of fire-unsafe, severely dilapidated buildings. What the court changed in the light of new evidence was 10 percent of the boundary lines around community districts. The masters could not have comprehended the necessity for these changes. They served the court for six weeks and then retired, while the judge, his two experts, and one special law clerk, as well as the nine parties to the litigation, continued on long after.

Lukas reports that when the permanent court order came out,

Ed McCormack was so angry he couldn’t bring himself to read the newspapers the next morning. He felt betrayed. After encouraging them to build consensus for a plan, the judge had kicked the props from underneath it. If the plan had needed refinement, why couldn’t Garrity have handed it back to them for “fine tuning” instead of simply overriding them? Now people could say, “I supported the

Masters' Plan, but I can't support the judge's." Garrity claimed to have retained 90 percent of the original plan, but McCormack was sure that the revisions, modest though they might be, had destroyed the plan's mystique and therefore its efficacy. He could not guarantee that his plan would have brought peace to the city, but he was certain that the judge's remedy would ensure more violence.

These may well have been McCormack's views. No one worked harder over the period of a few weeks, moreover, than did McCormack in his efforts to persuade key groups to back the Masters' Plan. He had been tireless, influential, and credible in his attempts to engineer a consensus around that plan. In the process, he brought back only one compromise he persuaded the other masters to make in order to render their plan acceptable, and that concerned a real-estate aim of Mayor Kevin White. McCormack's accomplishments lifted morale among the team of planners and gave them hope that consensus might extend beyond the federal courthouse to the divided and hostile segments of public leadership.

The quality of his contribution cannot be overstated, but anyone who was present at the court hearings in April and May of 1975 (as McCormack was not) would have realized that the Masters' Plan was incapable, as any plan would have been at that time, of establishing a common ground. Fine-tuning was quite beside the point. Planners and attorneys for the School Committee attacked the Masters' Plan in nearly every particular, condemning it as infeasible, educationally undesirable, and based on errors of fact. Attorneys for black plaintiffs critiqued the plan within an inch of its life. The State Board reached back to Charles Glenn and their former consultant, John Finger, to file an eighty-page critique. Mayor White's corporation counsel, Herbert Gleason and Kevin Maloney, gave no advocacy, and opposition came as well from the Boston Teachers Union, the Boston Association of School Administrators, El Comité for the Hispanic parents, and the Home and School Association, all parties to the litigation at the time. That Judge Garrity navigated these seas of division and reached the port called for in the Masters' Plan was the most extraordinary achievement in the remedial phases of the case.

Lukas suggests that Judge Garrity failed to approve the McCormack compromise out of some flaw in character, some Thomistic or puritanical penchant for caution—some inherent inability to embrace the practicalities of compromise. This, he writes, converged with the evolving rigidities of the Supreme Court and with the raging cross-pressures blowing across Boston. In this plot, both flaw and context destroy the last remaining chance for racial peace.

This is storybook stuff, however. It was fashioned locally as part of the means for exculpating Bostonians from the implications of their own uncompromising commitments to the status quo. Lukas serves as the chronicling outsider who collects, sifts, and weaves a more complete fabric of exculpation out of the stuff of these local legends.

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### The Cardinal, the Editor, and the Mayor

Three other public figures are profiled in *Common Ground*. We meet Humberto Cardinal Medeiros at the center of the book, *Globe* editor Thomas Winship at the two-thirds point, and Mayor Kevin White near the climax of the long story.

Each is provided with a biographical profile and these profiles vary in length, depending on how many details were available on the record and how much friends

and kin were disposed to tell Lukas. Where the biographical detail is thinnest, as with Cardinal Medeiros, Lukas fills in with the history of the church in Boston. The coverage of Cardinal Cushing and his era is so extensive that reviewers from other regions or countries might think he is still leading the archdiocese.

This is not the result of sloppiness on Lukas's part. His aim in selecting his public figures was to bracket the political action around the school desegregation story. But Cardinal Medeiros figured faintly in that action. Not only did he concentrate on the performance of his religious office, but the white ethnic hostility shown toward him immediately on his arrival in Boston was so grievous and so obviously a by-product of the racism mobilized by the antibusing movement that there was little he could do.

Unlike an investigative reporter, however, Lukas does not pin down or explicate the sources of the hatred and threats displayed toward the cardinal. Consistent with his dramatic format, he stresses the view that Cardinal Medeiros was unable to rise to the occasion. His chapter becomes one of recording what Medeiros did not do; the meetings he did not attend; the visits he did not make to Charlestown and South Boston. Most important for the book's account of race relations, Lukas finds that the cardinal's formal prohibition against giving white students refuge in parish schools was flawed with loopholes and weakly enforced by the archdiocese. Thus, like Winship and White, Medeiros failed to act effectively when the moment of decision arrived, according to Lukas, who further claims that when the court ordered its Phase I remedy in 1974, the cardinal's endorsement of it was halfhearted.

The reasoning about the performance of Cardinal Medeiros is subjective conjecture on the part of a journalist who was unable to penetrate the walls of privacy surrounding archdiocesan leadership in secular matters. The cardinal's actions are interpreted from a place remote from the locus of action, and they are contrasted invidiously with what the deceased Cardinal Cushing might have done—a form of what-if historiography. This conjectural exercise diverts the reader's attention from the political action among Catholics when desegregation took place—the homes and neighborhoods of the white ethnic enclaves where parish priests faced into the winds of racist violence, a story Lukas documents well in his chronicle of the lives of the McGoff family in Charlestown but does not link to the chapter on Medeiros.

Mayor Kevin White, according to Lukas, was a professional politician who proved himself "light as a feather." *Common Ground* gives the reader a picture of a man who, as a youth, barely graduated from high school and college; who struggled through law school; and who eked out a meager living as an assistant district attorney in his earliest adulthood. As with Louise Day Hicks, W. Arthur Garrity, Jr., and Humberto Medeiros before him, Kevin White is profiled as one who came unqualified into public life by reaching high state office at a tender age with little support from his politically influential family; in short, yet another twist of fate.

In spite of inauspicious beginnings, then, the Kevin White of *Common Ground* becomes a professional politician who builds a powerful, resiliently adaptive political machine which appears for many years to be highly appropriate to the volatile conditions of Boston. In addition, we are asked to believe, perhaps beyond credulity, that as mayor, Kevin White had little to do with members of the Vault, the private-sector committee that shapes big-corporate policy toward the city and that bankrolls projects and public leaders on critical occasions. This sounds credible until we learn that White carried out vast downtown redevelopment projects and always found political support and big money when it was needed most and seemed hardest to

come by. We also wonder how this flawed and barely qualified mayor succeeded in recruiting a cadre of exceptionally gifted young aides into service at City Hall and how, with them, he put into place more than a dozen innovative policies and programs of city revitalization in the years from 1968 to 1974.

Kevin White emerges gradually in the chapter devoted to him as the most nimble, inventive, and ethnically inclusive mayor Boston had elected and reelected in perhaps the last century. Lukas concludes, however, that when the challenge of school desegregation befell White in 1974, he botched the midnight test of leadership. The explanation Lukas offers is to be found in the chapters on Colin Divers, a White aide, as well as in the chapter on the mayor. It is, in sum, that Kevin White reached out for higher office and came within an inch of nomination as the Democratic candidate for vice president of the United States. Earlier, dreams of the governorship danced in his head, and later, the presidency itself seemed possible. His gifted aides, we are told, watched with despair as White's attention was diverted from the conduct of Boston's affairs. For this dream of self-aggrandizement, White suffered the fate of Narcissus.

In place of a researched account of the conditions under which Mayor White changed between 1974 and 1976 from an advocate for racial justice and adherence to constitutional law into a vigorously defiant opponent of court actions, Lukas focuses on trivia. He records stories about White telephoning the Garrity home during a crisis of racial violence and getting turned away—as if a White would really believe he could hold backstage conversations with a federal judge in the midst of complex civil litigation. Lukas even suggests, without having examined court documents, that Judge Garrity attached the mayor as a defendant in the case as a vindictive reaction to the telephone calls. The course of White's movement from the liberal center of the controversy toward the outer edges of the antibusing ideology is not chronicled; instead, the Kevin White in *Common Ground* fades away before our eyes. We get snippets about his success in being reelected in 1976, but the chapter ends with the legend of his political self-destruction. Once again, the opportunity to explore the forces at work within a part of the electorate, a part committed to defiant and even violent resistance to desegregation of the public schools, is sacrificed in favor of the interpretation of flaws in the character of an individual leader.

The chapter on Thomas Winship, "The Editor," departs from the essentially docudramatic treatment of the other four leaders. Here, Lukas deals with the career of a newspaperman and with the impact of school desegregation on the *Boston Globe*, a newspaper whose traditions and content he understands from earned professional familiarity with urban journalism. *Common Ground* is at its best in this chapter. It is one that will be reprinted for years to come for use in college courses on journalism.

The story of the editor coheres with other parts of *Common Ground* in one important respect, however: it is devoid of an account of why and how the attacks against the *Globe* became so violent and were so long-sustained. The response of Winship and others on the *Globe* is covered superbly. How the paper's leadership fumbled along the path toward their calvary, contributing to their own pain, links this chapter to others as well. Just what it was that spawned the South Boston lion of violence and what made it roar with such telling effects is left unexplained, however, and it becomes hard to link the fortunes of the *Globe* to the diverse and volatile subcultures of Boston.

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## Ordinary People

Stories of demigods are empty unless they include stories of the mortals in whose midst they dwell. As Sam Walter Foss wrote in his poem "In Memoriam," "The plain man is the basic clod/ From which we grow the demigod;/ And in the average man is curled/ The hero stuff that rules the world."

In his Author's Note, Lukas writes, "The three families at the center of my story were not selected as statistical averages or norms. On the contrary, I was drawn to them by a special intensity, an engagement with life, which made them stand out from their social context." No reader would expect three families to provide an adequate sample of Boston's ordinary people, but no reader can believe either that they were chosen simply for their "special intensity."

The Divers give the reader a picture of the young urban professionals of early Baby Boom vintage. They are upwardly mobile members of the white upper middle class who were touched somewhat by the civil rights and other countercultural movements of the sixties. They want social change and are willing to work for it, and they believe in racial equality. The McGoffs offer the sharply contrasting values of the downwardly mobile Boston Irish working class; they are not only rooted in Charlestown, they are stuck there by economic forces, and they want it to be culturally changeless. The Twymons give the reader a picture of the life and times of the bitterly hard-pressed, black single-parent household. With a touch of middle-classness in her past and with church connections into the civil rights revolution, Mrs. Twymon not only extends her imagination in many directions but also articulates her experiences with vigor and precision. Happily for Lukas, the Divers and the Twymons share the South End, and the Twymon daughters share Charlestown High School with two of the McGoff children.

Just as happily for the sake of plot structure, the Divers are connected with City Hall and later the State House, giving readers a small but select window into politics and social policy. The McGoffs have political-protest ties to the movement inspired by Louise Day Hicks, and their church life takes us through part of the portrayal of the archdiocese as well as into two local parishes. While the Twymons lack these direct connections with Boston leaders, Mrs. Twymon has associations with Martin Luther King, Jr., and with several local clergymen caught up in the northern struggle for minority rights in housing and education, thus giving balance to the plot and the way it seeks to connect heroes, however badly flawed, with ordinary people. A reader from a distant place might infer that Boston life is infused with extraordinary political activism among its residents, an inference contradicted by the evidence on voter registration and turnouts, but Lukas does not intend or assert this. Every plot has its inherently circumstantial contrivances.

Charlestown and the South End and a public school within each of these neighborhoods become settings for examining the interactions between ordinary people, public leaders, and the politics of social and economic change. They are good choices. Both neighborhoods are old and have well-documented histories that can be recounted engagingly by Lukas. In this way, prospective millions of Americans and foreign visitors who have heard of Bunker Hill or who have seen the Boston Pops Orchestra perform on television can identify with something about these settings.

Although *Common Ground* is the story of school desegregation in Boston framed among many subplots, only two public schools are treated in any detail in the book.

The chronicle of Charlestown High School during the 1974-76 years is strong and fully researched, and provides a glimpse of Lukas's journalistic abilities at their best. Had he done nothing else during his years on this project, this chronicle would vindicate his effort. Across the growing shelf of books and articles about the Boston Public Schools, nothing equals this reconstruction of daily life in and around the old high school for precision, relevance, and selection of detail. Indeed, no other source save the liability opinion of the federal court offers a fuller account of the nature and implications of racial segregation and discrimination and how these ideologies and practices undermined the learning opportunities for all students, before and during the earliest period of desegregation.

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Among the few details overlooked by Lukas are some which would have linked the narrative of Charlestown High to the school desegregation remedy itself, however. The rationale behind the assignment of students is not described, for example; that is, that Charlestown and the South End and Back Bay are within a few short miles of one another; that the overcrowding decried by Lukas made it possible for all Charlestown youth to attend Charlestown High; and that the old high school facility was being replaced, thanks to desegregation, by a fine new building nearby. Indeed, nowhere in *Common Ground* is there reference to the fact that the maximum busing distances for students assigned to community district schools were shorter, by court order, than the distances traveled by students in the suburban and rural districts of Massachusetts.

Lukas also leaves out of *Common Ground* any record of the numbers of students who were withdrawn from elementary and middle schools by their Charlestown parents rather than being allowed to travel the short distances to schools across the Charles River, in contrast to the black students who risked their lives daily for two years in commuting to schools in Charlestown. Nor does he note that, with the advent of desegregation, Charlestown parents and students had new, greatly enlarged opportunities to enroll in magnet schools and diverse vocational programs dotted throughout the city.

*Common Ground* shows with sharp clarity how a small fraction of the parents of Charlestown organized to protest and resist school desegregation. It describes vividly how these parents, including Alice McGoff, mobilized and then carried out the protest demonstrations not only of adults but of the youth inside Charlestown High School. While the demonstrations in the streets were tightly controlled by the police, white students inside the high school engaged in mob terrorization of black students as well as in daily, minor harassments consisting of ostracism and individual confrontation.

In the final chapter of his book, Lukas also shows how desegregation and such efforts as an integrated Upward Bound summer program induced the beginnings of racial tolerance in Lisa McGoff, one of the student leaders during the two years of violent protest. The reader can imagine, with the help of Lukas, a future in which the next generation of Charlestown families will refuse to serve as pawns in violent attacks against black children, youth, and parents. Lukas departs Charlestown on a note of hope. His story closes before subsequent episodes, extending well into 1985, suggest that violent white racism lives on in those young adult "Townies" who withdrew from school in the 1970s.

There are white demigods as well as antiheroes in *Common Ground*, but no Bostonian black demigods are presented. Not only do the Twymons lack heroes, but

every hope, every effort expended by all but three members of their family is crushed under the careening wheels of Boston's white policy and economy. According to Lukas, the federal court remedy made a mockery of Rachel Twymon's quest for a decent education for her children. She does not call it a mockery and she gives her daughter sound reasons for attending Charlestown High, but Lukas makes it seem hopeless for them. The dreams inspired by the *Brown* decision and by Martin Luther King, Jr., are pressed into ashes of despair by every event he records in employment, housing, welfare assistance, small-business development, criminal justice, and public education. Even within this larger context of oppression, Cassandra Twymon's days at Charlestown High, which receive the most sustained illumination by Lukas, read like the history of a civil rights movement whose outcomes are an exercise in collective madness brought on by court orders.

The alleged betrayal of white parishioners by Cardinal Medeiros is harder for Lukas to particularize because he lacks an insider's account of life within the church. Still, his emphasis on this allegation casts a pall second only to the alleged failure of Judge Garrity to embrace the McCormack compromise. The McGoffs believe their cardinal and his priests have abandoned them at every turn in the course of the desegregation crisis. Alice McGoff finds parochial school havens for two of her children, and two local priests remain sympathetic. Yet one of the cardinal's specialists in urban affairs, Father Michael Groden, not only accepts Judge Garrity's invitation to head a panel of citizens to monitor desegregation but does so while he continues to live in a parish rectory hard by the McGoffs' neighborhood.

One of the sympathetic priests urges the cardinal to visit Charlestown early in the fall of 1975. The cardinal refuses, and many weeks later a reporter quotes him as saying, "They wanted me to go to Charlestown. . . . To get stoned. They're looking for blood and they'd love to see me dead in the streets." The offense this statement gives Alice McGoff nearly exceeds Lukas's ability to record it, while the truth value in the cardinal's outburst goes unappraised. In preference to documenting the full scope of hatred and threats directed at the cardinal by some white parishioners, Lukas speculates on how Portuguese Catholics share very grim visions of the Christian peril. He notes cross burnings, death threats, hate mail, the demise of money offerings, and the relentless defiance shown toward church doctrine, but he is drawn dramatically toward a notion of a Portuguese persecution complex.

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### The Fallowness

In a television program of the 1960s entitled "The Naked City," the announcer began each week's telecast with "There are eight million stories in the Naked City. This is one of them." Unlike New York, Boston does not have 8 million stories to chronicle, but it does have at least six hundred thousand. J. Anthony Lukas has written up a dozen of those and has organized them around three families, five public leaders, and one class-action litigation that affected nearly everyone. His stories do not illuminate any one moral generalization. They are not explained in whole or in their parts.

There are fragments of social theory scattered throughout the book, but these are not reconciled with one another, nor are they used to develop an explanatory overview. One theory, borrowed from an urban economist, says that public-policy changes often trigger perverse secondary effects which are worse than the problem the policies addressed originally. Another, taken from psychiatrist Robert Coles, says

that by limiting racial justice reforms to the central city, reformers neglected white suburbia and thus pitted poor white against poor black children—a kind of variation on the idea of perverse effects. A third theory advanced by Lukas as his own proposes that the American ideals of community and equality are radically incompatible with one another in an advanced industrial society.

These theories would merit appraisal if *Common Ground* were a scholarly treatise or a contribution to social science, but it is not. Lukas holds to the ideals of the journeyman reporter. He is in search of the facts about what happened in Boston between 1968 and 1978, to the extent that what happened is contained in the stories he has selected for coverage.

Dramatically engaging as the story of each family may be, no evidence from them explains at all adequately the story of school desegregation. The Divers have some firsthand knowledge about a single elementary school in the South End, but that is the extent of their involvement. The Twymon children attend several different schools before and during desegregation, but Lukas captures the story of but one of these, Charlestown High. The McGoffs, two of them at least, carry us into parts of the citywide protest movement, but most of their experience is confined to a few years at Charlestown High.

The thousands of filings in *Morgan v. Hennigan* go unexamined in *Common Ground*. There is no review, and there are no quotations, from the public record of the litigation except for a sentence or two from the federal court's liability opinion. The contents of the *Globe's* coverage of race relations and the court case are alluded to but neither digested nor reviewed. Sourcebooks such as *Schools on Trial: An Inside Account of the Boston School Desegregation Case*<sup>4</sup> and "*I Respectfully Disagree with the Judge's Order*"<sup>5</sup> are not quoted or cited. The first of these summarizes the record of the court case and its implementation; the second reprints and excerpts the full range of media accounts of the dispute.

Much is gained by intensifying the focus on what journalists call the human interest elements in *Common Ground*, but much is also sacrificed. A reader cannot learn what transpired in the course of state and federal court proceedings over the years 1969 to 1978, and what a reader can learn is factually unreliable. And a reader cannot learn what in particular it was that the *Boston Globe* did in reporting on the dispute that may have contributed to attacks on the paper, its staff, and its facilities.

In addition to generating a kind of vacuum around the particulars of policy actions and media actions, Lukas avoids the question of how unique or representative Boston is among cities. Shall we read about Boston because its happenings are unlike those that took place in other American cities in the same years? This cannot be the intent, surely, because the militancy of opposition to school desegregation in Pontiac, Louisville, Pittsburgh, Kansas City, Indianapolis, and San Francisco, to mention places from diverse regions, was just as fierce and just as dependent on the arguments summarized in the book *Disaster by Decree*.<sup>6</sup> So, too, when Lukas reports on how white youths attacked Rachel Twymon's sister and family when they moved into a white neighborhood, we recall similar attacks in Detroit, Chicago, and Philadelphia.

Can it be that we are to take a case study of Boston as representative of urban America? There is a solid grain of truth in this idea, but Lukas does not consider it seriously, and his emphasis upon the historicity of Boston and its Bunker Hill distracts the reader from considering it. Journalists, unlike social scientists, are not burdened by disciplinary responsibility for gauging whether their reports are more or

less generalizable, and one cannot fault Lukas for working within his professional tradition. Journalists also do not have to assess whether the stories of one or two neighborhoods within a city are indicative of the stories of other parts of the same city, and indeed we learn little from *Common Ground* about South Boston, the core of resistance and defiance toward racial justice, let alone a dozen other neighboring subcommunities.

Unlike a sociological monograph or a novel by E. L. Doctorow, *Common Ground* should be appraised on two counts: Is its chronicle of what happened accurate, and is the point of view through which the chronicle is interpreted adequate to the scale of the events themselves?

On the first count, *Common Ground* records many facts and many statements offered as facts which are in error. A surfeit of details and conjecture is sometimes used in preference to a selective decision about which facts matter. No one needs, for example, to pile a persecution complex on top of the facts that Cardinal Medeiros suffered from diabetes and high blood pressure and was received by some parishioners with manifest hostility in order to provide an account of his despair. Nor does one need an account of the Mystery Nighters in order to learn how Arthur Garrity came to work on campaigns for John Kennedy. Many details are included because they add to the human interest factor, no doubt, but the standard of selection and verification is made of rubber.

On the second count, *Common Ground* is much weaker. If we are to read a hundred pages about violent reactions to changing racial policies, for example, the factual details presented should point toward something that is causally commensurate with the scale of the reactions. No evidence is mustered in the chapters on the five leaders to suggest that one or all of them caused the bloodshed, terror tactics, sniper attacks, or mob violence documented in the book. In his book, *The Boston School Integration Dispute*,<sup>7</sup> anthropologist J. Brian Sheehan narrates the same bloody record and finds it necessary to invent a conspiracy between Yankee Brahmin business leaders and “black politicians” in order to account for it. His conspiracy theory is another myth, to be sure, but at least it has scope.

The family chapters cannot account for the violence, because none of the families is situated to offer an interpretation. The McGoffs, or Alice and her daughter Lisa at least, are deeply implicated in desegregation protest activities, and their story is made exceptionally vivid for this reason. They were eager to tell Lukas their recollections years afterward in order to justify their conduct—indeed, perhaps, to memorialize it with pride.

Mrs. Alice McGoff paid little attention to the school dispute until the spring of 1973, when she attended a meeting and heard a Dorchester mother warn that “indiscriminate mixing of blacks and whites would be a disaster. ‘The three R’s will be turned to Riot, Rape, and Robbery, she said.’ . . . To Alice, the idea of sending her children to a school halfway across the city when they had a perfectly good school right across the street was utterly ridiculous. Moreover, what she knew of conditions in Roxbury strengthened her resolve . . . she knew it wasn’t safe over there.” That is the full reconstruction of her knowledge and attitudes. It certainly does not suffice as motivation for what followed.

Kevin White toured a half-dozen cities in the North in 1976 and spoke eloquently on what he called “the disaster of busing in Boston.” At that time he was still mayor. It was not until 1982 that he made public his conviction that Boston was a

particularly racist city, but when he was running for office he could not have been expected to account for "the disaster" in these terms or even in terms of voter attitudes. His own public reputation as a political liberal, while rusting away, made this impossible. And Edward McCormack, with his close ties to the politics of South Boston, his lifelong loyalty to his uncle, John McCormack, and his real-estate as well as political interdependence with Kevin White, did not tell Lukas about the intensity of rejection accorded the "McCormack compromise plan" by South Boston's political leaders, William Bulger and Raymond Flynn.

In a speech at the Kennedy Library, J. Anthony Lukas said no one should make Judge Garrity a scapegoat for the wreckage wrought by Bostonians, yet his own sources and his record of their accounts in *Common Ground* do precisely that. They assert that the liability opinion took too long in coming; that it failed to distinguish between northern and southern forms of racial segregation; that the judge adopted the Phase I remedy hastily and without prudent forethought; that his Phase II remedy was both rigid and draconian; and that his intrusion into School Department operations stimulated racial strife. Judge Garrity is not the only source of the problem: Louise Day Hicks is deemed a political anomaly rather than the symbol of protest. Cardinal Medeiros, we are told, was a poor choice on the part of a key person in the Vatican. Kevin White fails to keep his eye on Boston when his leadership is needed most. Tom Winship makes the *Globe* cosmopolitan and objective just when some readers yearn most for parochialism and for coverage that is sympathetic to protesters.

It is not Lukas who invents the exculpation of those who acted out the violence in the citywide movement that came to be named ROAR. His role is that of the visiting stranger who gathers the wool of exculpation heaped up by others. If Boston is the unique, historical Cradle of Liberty its citizens believe it to be, can the relentless hostility toward black parents and students and a small band of white moderates be reconciled with the image? Will stories about flawed leaders help restore the loaded surfaces of conventional ideology which cover over the realities of life near Bunker Hill? If the staff and offices of the *Boston Globe* are subjected to gunfire, can it be for reasons grounded in the ignorance and fears of subscribers who cannot bear to read what the *Globe* reports? Or shall the same surfaces of convention be smoothed over by the excuse that the *Globe* lost touch with its subscribers?

*Common Ground* leaves such questions unanswered. We are left to answer for ourselves why some white students at Charlestown High, goaded by their parents, snubbed, terrorized, and attacked black students inside and outside the school. We cannot learn from reading this book how opposition to racial desegregation came to be carried to such extremes.

Nothorners were shocked when similar extremes flared in Little Rock in 1957; but there, remember, a white school board and many administrators and teachers had tried to initiate desegregation, only to be blocked and attacked by Governor Faubus and others in the State House. Is it possible that the hands that rocked the Cradle of Liberty were culturally identical to the hands that blocked the schoolhouse door at Central High School in Little Rock nearly thirty years ago? None of Lukas's sources explore this question.

Something which has large potential value or utility but which is being unused is often called fallow. The criminal-court record in the rape of a white woman by Freddie Twymon is chronicled in minute detail in Lukas's last chapter on the

Twymon family. Its inclusion in *Common Ground* is presumably justified at one level of meaning by the author's effort to track the lives of every family member. At another level of meaning, however, this story discloses the fallowness of the book. We learn what heinous assaults took place but not why, whether on the level of individual psychology or on the plane of Boston and American society.

Were the sacrifices and gains accomplished by those who built the civil rights revolution wasted on Freddie Twymon? Is this story, by any assessment the grimmest individual behavior recounted in *Common Ground*, indicative of something, or is it finally meaningless in its blanketing import of despair? To what extent does the story sound an echo for the ROAR speaker who equated the black community with rape and robbery?

It was Martin Luther King, Jr., who revived Gandhi's dictum that poverty itself is the greatest violence that human beings wreak upon one another, but Lukas does not tell his readers what was done to Freddie Twymon that he would act so rapaciously. Nor does he probe what was done to Lisa McGoff that she would lead others to terrorize black students. She remembers feeling sickened by being a part of the protest march in which her schoolmate bludgeoned black attorney Theodore Landmark with the staff of an American flag while he was crossing City Hall Plaza on an innocent mission. By her own account, she was sickened not so much by the violent hatred expressed as by the realization that its criminality would be used to discredit her protest.

Lukas's theory of community versus equality defines community in narrow terms characteristic of closed, ultratraditional neighborhoods organized around ethnic and class homogeneity. Surely the ideal of community refers to something grander than tribal attachments to a place. In any event, it was not the quest for equal educational opportunity that led to the disintegration of closed neighborhoods in Boston and other big cities. That breakdown of barriers began during the dislocations of the Great Depression and the explosion of social and economic change during World War II. Lukas gives us many details about Charlestown and the South End in support of this history of deep and irreversible change, and he shows us how the McGoffs were stranded in a backwater housing project left over from the 1930s; but he does not make the mental connections essential to comprehending how racism, white and black together, is forged in the crucible of a profit-centered, privatistic urban culture.

The word *fallow* also refers to ground which has been plowed and harrowed, but not cropped. Thus, Lukas plows the ground of Boston, but the meanings of the lives and times that he treats go unharvested. Nor is the ground he works on common in the sense in which we think of locating the common ground in a dispute. On this issue, he is quoted in an interview in the *Boston Globe*: "The book is about human beings, all who are right by their own certain lights. . . . I try to leave it to the reader. I would like the reader to be as confounded . . . as I was. I was constantly shuttling back and forth, never knowing where my sympathies were."

The question is not one of rightness or wrongness, however, nor of sympathies, but of why events went the way they did in Boston. One cannot answer this by recording what a few respondents say they did and how they felt about it. Not even the events themselves can be described validly by this method.

A part of the answer to the question comes from the effects of racism. Central to racist thought has been the view that the stereotyped qualities attributed to black

Americans by some white Americans are biologically innate. These stereotypes have functioned to rationalize discrimination and segregation, the methods by which blacks are oppressed, confined, and isolated. Decades of racist rhetoric prefigure and drench the issue of school desegregation in Boston. Pieces of that rhetoric are picked up by Lukas in his chronicle of Charlestown and in his report on Codman Square in Dorchester. Generally, however, the substance, pervasiveness, and uses of racist ideas and actions go unexamined in *Common Ground*. Those who can afford to buy the book may include some readers who keep their stereotypes under firm control as part of a custom of civility, but *Common Ground* is not likely to increase their awareness of the damage this ideological virus can do, whether leashed or unleashed. Colin Diver experiences such an awareness when he feels the agonizing pressures of defending his property and family from intruders. The pain of recognizing his own racism is part of what motivates him to relocate to Newton from the South End. This is one of the few contexts in which a major aspect of the thoughtways of many Bostonians is presented, however.

Another explanation of events in Boston surely lies in the political culture of the city. It was organized for nearly a century around wards that preserved and patronized the closed, vertically structured, white ethnic enclaves so brilliantly described in *Street Corner Society* more than forty years ago. Six of these wards were Irish and two were Italian. Ordinary citizens at the base of each enclave had ward bosses and other minor politicians who mediated their claims with the big bosses downtown. Public offices, including school principalships and custodial jobs, were bought and sold in a white marketplace where money, votes, and loyalties were the currency of exchange. Black, Hispanic, and Asian households had no place in the political culture, which lay like a seamless blanket across all services that involved public finance, real estate and facilities, and taxation.

From 1950 to 1970, hundreds of thousands of households relocated from Boston to the suburbs and out of the region as well. The aging white population that was left in the central city grew puzzled, angry toward the relocators and about themselves, and increasingly antagonistic toward politicians who concentrated less on the neighborhood wards and ever more intensely on the profits to be taken from downtown renewal, gentrification projects, and, in the 1960s, federal investments in urban assistance.

Politicians who, like Louise Day Hicks, Albert O'Neil, Fred Langone, and John Kerrigan, continued to bank on the white ethnic enclaves found themselves cut off from the newer, more profitable politics of renewal and finance under Mayors Collins and White. New school construction was a part of the new politics, beginning in 1954. Crumbling and fire-unsafe facilities were left in operation as part of avoidance of conflict with the enclave dwellers, while new buildings were placed in ways that reinforced redevelopment. Some enclaves, such as East Boston and South Boston, were left out of the redevelopment process, except where Massport cut into real estate in order to expand the airport and harbor areas.

Black Bostonians were immaterial, at least until 1965, to the grinding impasse facing white families who could not make it out of the crumbling public housing projects left over from 1937 and the endless miles of wooden, arson-prone walkups nearby. Until their numbers grew, blacks were a small, divided minority stuffed away toward near invisibility when viewed from South Boston. The march on Selma could be watched on television, but it was far away. When black parents organized and

dared to press claims for the education of their children, however, the challenge to white ethnic families became apparent. What was happening nationwide in the Kennedy and Johnson years came to Boston. For some white families, affirmative action and the other trappings of equal treatment seemed to be part of the same plot that caused suburbanization, urban demolition, job insecurity, and the shredding of such old enclaves as the West End and Charlestown. That the demolition cut an even broader swath through black Roxbury provided no comfort.

Unlike Buffalo, a sister city whose economy had been more severely decimated by the Great Depression, Boston hosted no sizeable, radically deprived white ethnic subcommunity like the Polish Americans. The Boston Irish, poor and struggling as they were in the aftermath of World War II, could take pride in the success of their rise to political hegemony. When a federal court ordered school desegregation in Buffalo, the occasion offered renewed and enlarged opportunities for Polish-American children as readily as it did for black Americans, and after some years of tension, both groups worked collaboratively toward that end. Boston, meanwhile, had already undergone commercial transformation. It was not a rusting manufacturing and steelworking city like Buffalo, and by 1970 it had become a contender for at least a basement slot in the world-class city competition as a financial, medical, scientific, and higher educational center. Its political structure had turned toward federal concerns with the Kennedys, and its mayors and their aides had gone to Harvard or M.I.T. What some of the Boston Irish saw in the racial issue of public schooling was but one more occasion for a downward slide in their hegemony.

If we can begin to answer why events happened the way they did, we may also speculate on whether the violence of 1974 and 1975 could have been prevented. This essay has argued that the claim that better litigation, better remedial plans, and better efforts by city and state authorities could have stemmed the tide of strife is specious. Nor would a different cardinal and a different editor of the *Boston Globe* have made a difference, either.

Kevin White in 1974 was probably as competent a mayor as a mayor of Boston could possibly be. He could have committed to the cause of racial peace the full weight of his machine, but only in the certain knowledge that all would be lost for him and for the middle managers of his organization. Some American cities have had political leaders who have made such a commitment, but they can be counted on the fingers of two hands. His successor's investment in the politics of antidesegregation would have been greater than his ever became, substantial as that was by 1976. The alienation between the white enclaves and City Hall was in itself too extreme by 1970 to have made such a choice an effective one, however courageous.

The violence might have been prevented had the federal government developed and carried out a national urban policy. Such a policy was beginning to be framed as early as 1960, parts of it by leaders from Boston, but it was drained away by the Vietnam War and the privatistic politics of the Nixon years. Given the initial impetus of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, we can speculate that distributive justice, coupled with effective housing, transportation, and education programs, would have made school desegregation in Boston a concomitant of urban reconstruction rather than the result of a court dispute. Many big cities of the North, including Boston, were within reach of redressing racial wrongs in public education as part of new school construction and other programs of the times. By the time of the inner-city riots and

burnings that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., that opportunity had decayed.

When we reflect upon opportunities missed, it becomes obvious that no contemporary central city in the United States can be interpreted through the ancient visions of the Greek city-state, the self-sufficient fortress cities of medieval Europe, or the shining city on a hill of the Puritans. Boston today is a small dot in the great nexus of an international commercial and environmental ecosystem, as it has been since at least 1945. As the world and the nation go now, so goes Boston, a dwindling dot in an expanding metro area. The ignorance, fear, and anger of those who tried to lock the gates of Charlestown, Dorchester, or West Roxbury are the mental and emotional debris from which an urban legend of innocence is spawned. J. Anthony Lukas fails to find the facts which exist in the midst of that debris and which put the rule of equal treatment above the custom of special advantage within the closed neighborhood, no matter how hardened the crust of local custom has become. Alice McGoff, Lisa McGoff, and Freddie Twymon, together or apart, cannot be exculpated. They are what the later decades of the American twentieth century made them become. With the Boston Public Schools, as with Watergate, justice finally prevailed, but not before the worst in many people crawled out from under the rock of convention.

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## Notes

1. *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka et al.*, 349 U.S. 294, 1954.
2. Garrity's appointment was indeed rushed. Newly elected, President Kennedy was replacing Republican holdovers like Elliot Richardson, then U.S. attorney for Massachusetts, from coast to coast within the first one hundred days after his inauguration. The need for a replacement in Massachusetts was acutely sensitive for several reasons. Fast or slow as the appointment process may have been, Arthur Garrity was a prime, highly qualified candidate in any circumstance.
3. *Morgan v. Hennigan*, 379 F.Supp. 410, 1974.
4. Robert A. Dentler and Marvin B. Scott, *Schools on Trial: An Inside Account of the Boston School Desegregation Case* (Cambridge, Mass.: Abt Books, 1981).
5. J. Michael Ross and William M. Berg, "*I Respectfully Disagree with the Judge's Order*": *The Boston School Desegregation Controversy* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981).
6. Lino A. Graglia, *Disaster by Decree: The Supreme Court Decisions on Race and the Schools* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1976).
7. J. Brian Sheehan, *The Boston School Integration Dispute: Social Change and Legal Maneuvers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

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Among the works discussed in this essay:

- Midair*, by Frank Conroy. 149 pages. E. P. Dutton. \$15.95.  
*The Inman Diary: A Public and Private Confession*, edited by Daniel Aaron.  
 2 vols. 1,661 pages. Harvard University Press. \$50.00.  
*The Nuclear Age*, by Tim O'Brien. 312 pages. Alfred A. Knopf. \$16.95.  
*The Long Approach*, by Maxine Kumin. 80 pages. Viking-Penguin. \$14.95.  
*Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families*,  
 by J. Anthony Lukas. 659 pages. Alfred A. Knopf. \$19.95.  
*House*, by Tracy Kidder. 341 pages. Houghton Mifflin Co. \$17.95.
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*The house of fiction has in short not one window, but a million—  
 a number of possible windows not to be reckoned, rather; every  
 one of which has been pierced, or is still pierceable, in its vast  
 front, by the need of the individual vision and by the pressure of  
 the individual will.*

—Henry James  
 Preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*

One hundred and fifty years ago, Henry David Thoreau often walked from Concord to Sudbury, where I now live. On trips to Cambridge, driving through the twists and turns of New England back roads, through slanting winter light, I often pass Walden Pond, set like a bright eye, deep and glassy, amid the hills of Concord. Sometimes, zipping past in my Japanese car, I encounter the invisible image of Thoreau—a striding, solitary walker who casts a quick, cold eye over me. I suddenly recall that other Walden: hut, bean field, wood paths, his triumphantly minimalist dwelling (“ten feet wide by fifteen feet long”), set above the pond—the proper site for Thoreau’s epic of the near at hand. Though long gone, his resonant hut and domain still hold their value against the wildly escalating land and house prices of Boston’s western suburbs.

If it is asserted that civilization is a real advance in the condition of man—and I think that it is, though only the wise improve their advantages—it must be shown that it has produced better dwellings without making them more costly; and the cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run.<sup>1</sup>

Here, living in the long run—where every inch of land in Boston's western suburbs is zoned, owned, much of it fenced or posted—I know Thoreau would wither us with his contemptuous stare for what we call civilization; he would be appalled at all it has cost.

Thoreau haunted me not only as a former neighbor but as a voice in counterpoint to the books I read during the last months of 1985.<sup>2</sup> I was interested in those books by New England authors which, first, concentrated art and inquiry upon issues relevant to our particular sense of *place*. What Eudora Welty said about "place in fiction" explains what I was looking for in local fiction, poetry, autobiography, and social commentary:

Location pertains to feeling; feeling profoundly pertains to place; place in history partakes of feeling, as feeling about history partakes of place.<sup>3</sup>

Each book I read in those months connects feeling, place, history, even prophecy; some connect, as E. M. Forster urged, the prose, or the poetry, with the passion. Most of them are set on local grounds; all are written by those who have defined their own sense of New England place; therefore, these books tell us something about our parochial, regional selves, but they also reveal larger patterns. Their authors might say what, according to Patrick Kavanagh, Homer said: "I made the Iliad from such / A local row."

For all that, these books are an odd lot, landscapes and structures of eccentric designs: (1) a collection of stories by Frank Conroy, his first book since *Stop Time* (1967). Where *Stop Time* was a detailed, narrative autobiography that read like fiction, *Midair* is an often generalized, fragmented fiction with obvious autobiographical implications; (2) the weird diary of Arthur Crew Inman, over 1,600 pages of his often vile obsessions, handsomely edited and curiously published by Harvard University Press; (3) a study of nuclear anxiety over *five* decades, in the form of a polemical novel, by Tim O'Brien; (4) a collection of poems, also centered upon nuclear anxiety, by Maxine Kumin. And finally, two works that vivify social and aesthetic inquiry with the devices of fiction: (5) an intensely local epic on the Boston controversy over school integration, by J. Anthony Lukas; (6) a study, from the bare ground up, of a house built in Amherst, Massachusetts, written by Tracy Kidder. Each of these books sets out to embody and assess American civilization by evoking an appropriate emblem. Most of these writers bend their forms to fit the shapes of unique visions; however, read together, the works suggest strikingly similar concerns that update what Perry Miller called the New England Mind and that hint at the state of the nation. Perhaps it is true, as one critic has suggested, that "the books we read read us."<sup>4</sup>

These books, then, are structures of understanding—houses of fiction, poetry, autobiography—which might effectively be compared with differently shaped buildings into which the reader enters to transact his business with the authors; they are verbal structures out of whose windows we reimagine our worlds. No enemy of analogy, Thoreau might like the comparison; though, after looking over his eclectic selection of works that combine purposes and mix styles, he might register a reservation:

However, if one designs to construct a dwelling house, it behooves him to exercise a little Yankee shrewdness, lest after all he find himself in a workhouse, a labyrinth without a clue, a museum, an almshouse, a prison, or a splendid mausoleum instead.

Certainly dwellings figure centrally in these works. Yet, not all of these writers *root* their characters, as Yeats prayed his daughter might be “rooted in one dear perpetual place.”<sup>5</sup> For example, the middle-aged hero of Frank Conroy’s story collection, *Midair*, is in constant motion, an American inner-emigré who hops between cities and between lives, calling no *place* his home—much like Conroy, who commuted between his teaching at M.I.T. in Cambridge and his duties as director of the literature program at the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C. This fictional hero finds, in the collection’s title story, his most telling moment of revelation, fittingly enough while he is trapped between floors in an elevator, confronting the terror of a young man who might have been his son, whom he has not seen for some time because of his divorce and other displacements characteristic of contemporary Americans. After a while, this substitute father settles down the terrified young man, his son-for-the-moment, by affecting calm confidence in a reassuringly American cliché: “It’s going to be O.K. . . . I know we are safe, and if you focus on me *you* will know we are safe.” Finally, magically, the elevator rises, its doors open; the ad hoc family ascends above danger. Here the elevator—temporary housing for those in transit—serves as a brief place of entrapment, a site for the forced renewal of lost family bonds, then a point of release into the wider world; the story is a comforting myth of redemption, buoyed by Conroy’s careful and lyrical language.

Much the opposite might be said of the perpetual place—Garrison Hall, the “somewhat seedy but respectable apartment hotel in Boston’s Back Bay”—in which Arthur Inman—recluse, invalid, compulsive and overreaching diarist, center of his own narrative and hero of his own imagining—lived from 1919 to 1963, when he committed suicide and, blessedly, stopped his diary at something over 17 million words. His rooms, too, could be said to serve as temporary housing for those in transit, for Inman bribed sad, marginal “talkers,” through newspaper ads (“Wanted: Persons who have had interesting experiences and who can tell them interestingly to talk to an invalid.”)<sup>6</sup> to come to his rooms, to confess their often sordid secrets for the delectation of his diary, frequently satisfying his own contorted sexual desires on them as well. Inman also used his own neediness and wealth to persuade several people to stay for even longer periods in his darkened rooms; his groupings were something of an antifamily, his rooms a place of release only into the narrow world of his prejudices and obsessions. *The Inman Diary*, despite bold excisions and graceful editorial linkings by Daniel Aaron, stands as a misbegotten myth of one man’s pathological ego, in life and in what he would have us think is “art.” Some have compared *The Inman Diary* to *Notes from the Underground*, but Dostoevsky controlled and distanced himself from his “sick man,” while Inman, even in his own judgment, lacked artful detachment; the invocation of Proust for comparison seems equally farfetched, for Inman wrote in a style of sustained pretentiousness that would make Proust cringe. Putting the best construct on his writing, even Aaron has to admit that it is “clogged with extraneous and turgid sections,” though he goes on to say that the book “is nevertheless a work of literary and historical importance.”<sup>7</sup>

It is difficult for this reader to detect either literary or historical importance in *The Inman Diary*. Only as a case history—one of the categories in which Aaron offers to place this work—does Inman sustain interest, for he has a mind eaten alive with hatreds. Here, for example, are some of his reflections upon ethnicity in Germany and America, written in April 1933:

But Hitler may know what he is doing. The Jews may have a strangle hold on the finances of Germany. I feel (with a qualm as to the wisdom of my feelings) that I wish to God every Jew and every Irishman and every negro and every Mediterranean and every Mexican could by some means be forced to leave this fair broad land of ours to us Nordics.

Then Inman accounts for his "qualm" and lays claim to his own conceptual originality by noting that he is "fair enough" to credit Jews and Negroes with contributions to the arts. However:

The Irish and the Greek we owe nothing. I would rather an Irish pogrom than a Jewish one. Which is my viewpoint alone. The majority of Nordic Americans nurse a far greater antipathy toward the Jews than toward the Irish.

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This is typical of Inman's contribution to American "thought." Aaron is least convincing when he argues that Inman provides insights into Boston's social history or the social history of America for a half century, "a streetside view of the passing scene, of artifacts and mores and styles of living that to a large extent have disappeared." The truth is that Inman's view is far more rear window than streetside: "My days are passed, as it were, behind plate glass," Inman grants, in May 1945. America passes him from the distance of a detachment derived from his (probably psychosomatic) illness, wealth, pride and prejudice; an America seen from his hotel window, in a room which provides him with a Puckish view of mortal foolishness. It is his quirky *exception* from American "artifacts and mores and styles of living" that elicits contemporary interest from those readers who, as Louis Auchincloss said, "have an inexhaustible appetite for details, any details, and have the patience to try to piece together America from *all* of its parts."<sup>8</sup>

The best that can be said for *The Inman Diary* is that it provides a lengthy case history of the dark, sick side of the American imagination. Daniel Aaron no doubt saw this diary as a challenge for an American Studies approach, which seeks value in any documents as social indicators, however flawed they may be as literature. It is less clear why Harvard University Press chose to publish this work or, having decided to publish, chose to grant it such size and finish—in a boxed set, with heavy advertising—lending it a dignity it otherwise might not have earned. Inman himself wondered, in January 1929,

Am I a person of sufficient interest to justify such a self-portrait? It seems I must be the most egotistic man in the world to imagine that in these pages posterity will find any interest. Well, I have been honest and I have been profuse. If I take your fancy, you will enjoy this diary. Otherwise it will be veritable twaddle.

By accepting the offer of Inman, through his trustees, to have his estate lavishly support the diary's publication, Harvard University Press has granted an insignificant man an undeserved posthumous standing for composing profuse twaddle. They have given us, in Auchincloss's words, "the cork-lined chamber without Proust." *The Inman Diary*—an example of the literary dwelling as padded cell!

At first glance, Tim O'Brien's *The Nuclear Age* appears to be an updating of Inman's diary, for again we have a character, like the hero of Melville's *Bartleby the Scrivener*, who "prefers not" to be part of the common weal; instead he holes himself up, closes himself in, severs his chain of being with the rest of the world—allowing only limited contact, upon his own terms—and retires to his metaphoric hut in the woods. However, the hero of *The Nuclear Age*, William Cowling, finds neither a

Walden-like pastoral retreat nor the upper-story depths of Arthur Inman's regal eagle's nest at the center of the city. The time is 1995; after five decades of nuclear fear, "the *big angst*," Cowling has crossed new psychic boundary lines. Desperately attempting the reverse of what Arthur Inman tried, Cowling seeks to translate "the events of imagination" into "the much less pliant terms of the real world." With its future setting and its hero's insistence that we digest the implications of nuclear buildup—"So who's crazy? Me? Or is it you?"—in order to see through the world-as-it-is and face the world-as-it-might-be, *The Nuclear Age* can be seen as a romance, a mode which exists, Hawthorne told us in "The Custom House" preface to *The Scarlet Letter*, as "a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other."

Born at the beginning of the nuclear age, in 1945, in his fiftieth year Cowling tries to make his separate peace by literally holing up, by digging a bomb shelter to house him and his family, in a hole lined with concrete, roofed by steel, containing a water tank, a generator, wall-to-wall rugs, a pine-paneled den, a family room, two bedrooms, closet space, a Ping-Pong table and a piano, all the requisite appliances, track lighting, a word processor for his wife, Bobbi, and a game room for his daughter, Melinda. All the comforts of home—in a hole in the ground. Cowling, a modern Job, laments:

I would prefer the glory of God and peace everlasting, world without end, a normal household in an age of normalcy.

In the nuclear age this is no longer possible, so Cowling goes mad (goes sane?), locks his family inside his house until he prepares his shelter, even considers a preventive first strike: blowing himself and his family away with a stolen nuclear warhead to get the inevitable suffering over with. The events of his "interesting times" have driven him over the edge: the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962—"The path we have chosen for the present is full of hazards, as all paths are," said J.F.K.—Vietnam; the assassinations and demonstrations of 1968; his own fugitive, underground activities. As Bobbi puts it, in Yeats's words,

We had fed the heart on fantasies,  
The heart's grown brutal from the fare.

But Bobbi does not cite the rest of that stanza, from part six of "Meditations in Time of Civil War":

More substance in our enmities  
Than in our love; O honey-bees,  
Come build in the empty house of the stare.

Yeats's refrain—"Come build in the empty house of the stare"—might apply to all the writers here discussed, for they all seek what Frost's Oven Bird sought:

The question that he frames in all but words  
Is what to make of a diminished thing.

Yeats's "honey-bees" are enjoined to build where the birds have fled and, in so building, to shore up the loosening masonry of his tower's walls, diminished as those walls were by civil war. Arthur Inman imagines himself under siege—his fears come true, when urban renewal, promoted by those detested Irish-American politicians,

levels his neighborhood in the 1960s—but he is unconvincing when he tries to persuade us that the enemy he has met is anyone other than himself. Tim O'Brien, however, quite convincingly dramatizes an external danger of sufficient dimension—nuclear threat as an emblem of cosmic and psychic uncertainty—and we are persuaded that his hero has his reasons, though he may have lost his mind. In the end, Cowling finds more substance in his love than in his enmities. He cannot kill, even for love.

To live is to lose everything, which is crazy, but I choose it anyway, which is sane.  
It's the force of passion. It's what we have.

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For all of its inventiveness, *The Nuclear Age* is not a successful novel. O'Brien crosses the border between the Actual and the Imaginary world so easily that the reader does not know quite where he is. What are we to think, for example, of the purchase of a mountain containing vast uranium deposits by Cowling and his group of dissidents, then its sale for \$25 million? What are we to think of dialogue assigned to the *hole*, which urges Cowling to "Do it!"? In these instances, Cowling has ceased to be a representative man in a recognizable world and has instead become a figure in a polemical cartoon—even he is not free from nuclear capitalism! More exactly, O'Brien has moved from the realm of literary realism to the distorted landscape of literary surrealism, where arbitrariness comes as no surprise. Finally, we don't know what to think about Cowling, who seems caught between the stone and hard place of paradox: "I'm a realist. Nothing's real," he says; he *knows* disaster will come, but he refuses to *believe* it. He chooses life with his family, though he knows it is a choice which dooms them to a terrifying nuclear death. This, then, is a novel which sets out to raise our consciousness about nuclear threat—"The bombs are real," insisted O'Brien in a televised interview, echoing words he had written for Cowling<sup>9</sup>—but which has the effect of making us, like Cowling, feel particularly helpless. What should he, or we, or the writer, *do*?

In the title story of *A Glimpse of Sion's Glory*<sup>10</sup>—a recent, elegant collection of stories by the English fiction writer Isabel Colegate—a character writes of Tolstoy's *What Then Must We Do?* which he thinks should be the subtitle of every novel published.

The novelist should write for his generation and his concern should be nothing less than How To Live, but I do not know my generation and I haven't the faintest idea how to live.

This note of salvific uncertainty also resounds in *The Nuclear Age* and other works of this period. Some of these writers would "search for images adequate to our predicament," in the words of Seamus Heaney,<sup>11</sup> but none could answer Luke's question to John the Baptist: "And the people asked him saying, What shall we do then?" Perhaps writers and readers alike, as one reviewer of *The Nuclear Age* suggested, would do well to *make do*, to go with what they have rather than look for lasting solutions or resolutions.<sup>12</sup>

Maxine Kumin's poetry embeds itself in the pastoral. She sets her poems deep in the soil of what Flannery O'Connor described as the "country" of moral implications.<sup>13</sup> Kumin's imaginative landscape derives from southern New Hampshire. In "My Elusive Guest," for example, a poem that appears near the end of *The Long*

*Approach*, Kumin recalls a moose who once came into the kitchen of her house, forty years earlier, when another woman “broomed” him out. Kumin, like Thoreau, “loved the grayness of them, homespun / with leafy horns like lichens made of bones.” Now she dreams of such a moose, such a visit, invites it: “My wild thing, my moose.” Perhaps the moose poses no threat in her imagination because, as *The Long Approach* indicates, she has more looming fears. For Kumin, as for O’Brien, nuclear anxiety is where the truly wild things are!

*The Long Approach* is fraught by what Henry James called “the imagination of disaster.”<sup>14</sup> Its midsection, placed between sections on family and place, ranges from the Nazi holocaust to Middle East turmoil to nuclear dread, giving her the vision of an Isaiah to see *through* earthly images of felicity. When M.I.T. students loll about the Cambridge grass on a spring afternoon, the poet sees “the dead of Beirut in the sun” and fears that time when a “Poseidon sub sticks up its snub nose”—a blunt line of spondees that explodes the scene’s apparent pastoral bliss.

The third section of *The Long Approach*, titled “On the Farm,” is composed of poems with an acute, even poignant sense of place in the face of its disintegration. In “Out in It”:

Crouched under my desk, at a bad clap  
eighty pounds of spotted dog quakes.  
I too lose my head in a storm like this  
or would like at least to bury it.

But there is no place to hide from a menace her dog could not imagine.

Where do we want  
to be when the first strike comes?  
Out in it with all our kith and kin  
crisping in one another’s arms.

Thinking about this unthinkable, there is, in the words of the poem by Matthew Arnold which Kumin here echoes, neither “certitude nor peace, nor help for pain”; but there is an *idea of home* to which she inevitably gravitates, however fragile its defenses, just as there is a desk under which her dog hides from the thunder. In the volume’s title poem, Kumin prays for a safe journey *home*, north of Boston:

I’m going home the old way with a light hand on the reins  
making the long approach.

The epigraph for *The Long Approach* comes from *The Maine Woods*, where Thoreau celebrated

the planet Earth, as it was made for ever and ever—to be the dwelling of man, we say—so Nature made it, and man may use it if he can.

It is just that use and abuse, posed by nuclear weapons, that makes Kumin, like O’Brien, so conscious of impermanence, so charged with the imagination of disaster, so conscious of *home as haven*.

J. Anthony Lukas’s *Common Ground* can be read as a tale of several houses and the Boston citizens who lived in them, emerged from them to do battle on common ground, then retreated into them to seek haven. Because *class* was a determining element in the lives of those Bostonians who were affected by the “Boston busing

crisis”—as the court-ordered plan for school integration in 1974–75 was called—Lukas examines those who lived in both public and private housing. Two of the “three American families” who are dramatized in *Common Ground* lived in publicly assisted housing: Alice McGoff and her seven children, representing Boston’s Irish-American community, lived in the Bunker Hill project, in Charlestown; Rachel Twymon and some of her six children, representing Boston’s black community, lived in Methunion Manor, a privately initiated housing project in Roxbury which received major subsidies from federal and city agencies. Still another example of symbolic public housing, at the other end of the class spectrum, was the Parkman House, once the Beacon Hill home of Francis Parkman, willed to the city of Boston; however, during the 1970s the Parkman House became the second home of Boston Mayor Kevin White, who often retreated from the tensions of the busing crisis into his haven, to look again on things lovely. White was house proud: “It’s got to be the loveliest staircase in America!” he said, looking up into its inner heights. Colin and Joan Diver and their two children, the third of Lukas’s three families, representing Boston’s Yankee community (though Colin Diver’s father was Protestant-Irish), were also house proud. They moved to Boston’s South End in 1970, into a town house built in 1865, a stately dwelling with a bow front, a high stoop, and a mansard roof; though when the Divers moved in, the house had fallen into disrepair, with its floors and sashes rotting, its plaster falling, and its wires exposed. It was, in short, the perfect symbol for the Divers’ commitment, inspired by Jane Jacobs’s *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, to a project of personal urban renewal.

As things turned out, each of these dwellings can be seen as a failed vision of community revitalization. The Divers were determined to leave behind the homogeneous, sterile suburbs for a home amid the mixed racial and ethnic variety of the inner city. The McGoffs, the Twymons, and even Kevin White saw themselves as moving *up* when they moved into their public housings. The Bunker Hill project opened on Thanksgiving in 1940, symbolizing New Deal determination that citizens no longer be “ill housed.” Plans for Methunion Manor were begun by members of the Union Methodist Church who wanted to establish a new relationship with the wider community of poor and blacks; then it was underwritten by government agencies seeking increased public housing. The Parkman House was willed to Boston’s citizens in a gesture of Boston Brahmin noblesse oblige. Yet, in all cases, practice compromised civic vision. The Parkman House was sometimes used by Kevin White—the Irish-American politician with *two* houses, one public and the other private (on Beacon Hill, former Brahmin preserve)—as a site for planning sessions on ways to cope with the controversy surrounding “forced busing” and other political matters, a use which Parkman certainly did not have in mind for his home. Similarly, the ideal vision of public housing for the poor had deteriorated: prejudice and violence surrounded and inhabited both the Bunker Hill project and Methunion Manor. Finally, even the Divers gave up. After Colin Diver attacked a mugger with a baseball bat and Joan Diver realized that the very people they wished to live near were hostile to the gentrification they brought to the neighborhood, they decided to move to Newton Corner, into a large, Greek revival house with a white picket fence. Colin Diver then worked to restore this house with the same dedication he had put into restoring his South End house, though his vision of the possibilities of community in Boston were shaken. Good fences make good neighbors. *Common Ground* maps the territory between representative families and the wider community

into which they entered when they left their separate, often internally divided, houses.

Throughout the fall of 1985, *Common Ground* had an impact on Boston's cultural community which echoed the impact of court-ordered busing a decade earlier. In the press, on television, and in the lecture halls, the book was debated. It seemed that no one who read it remained unaffected, for *Common Ground* draws the reader into a powerful narrative in which public events intersect with the lives of private citizens in the most revealing fashion; however, it was less clear what the book *meant*. Lukas's title suggests a common ground of experience, a place to build a coherent community future, but his narrative dramatizes the sometimes killing grounds of racial, class, and political hatreds.

Take the case of Judge W. Arthur Garrity, who determined, on June 21, 1974, that the Boston School Committee had "segregative intent," and who was responsible for adopting the state implementation plan of school integration which addressed this issue. Lukas's chapter on W. Arthur Garrity, "The Judge," concludes with a sharply drawn contrast between Judge Garrity himself and Ed McCormack, an adviser (or master) on the implementation of Phase II of Boston's public school integration plan, in 1975—a plan which placed South Boston's largely Irish-American neighborhoods and Roxbury's largely black neighborhoods in the same district and on a collision course. As Lukas examines Judge Garrity "pondering a legal problem," he cites Yeats's condemnation of those who "think in the mind alone" and not in the "marrow bone." Ed McCormack, practicing the Irish-American art of political compromise, "prayed that Arthur Garrity's marrow bone would prevail." But Judge Garrity kept the South Boston–Roxbury pairing in his May 10, 1975, decision. This infuriated McCormack; in Judge Garrity's view, there was no alternative. Lukas concludes:

The jurist in Arthur Garrity had prevailed over the pragmatist; John Marshall over Oliver Wendell Holmes; Thomas Aquinas over Jack Kennedy; the mind over the marrow bone.

Here we see a fine example of Lukas's narrative method. The legal and social issues are seen from *personal* points of view: those who *decide* here *debate* the issues within their own minds and between each other. Lukas explores the implications of the debate while respecting the integrity of everyone's position. Both Judge Garrity and Master Ed McCormack are honorable men. (Although at times during the mid 1970s it appeared that many of the characters in the Boston busing crisis were acting out of the lowest, most self-seeking motives, in *Common Ground* nearly everyone acts out of the highest motives; battle over *turf* and *rights* becomes, in Lukas's view, struggle over questions of *community* and *equity*. "Almost everyone in my book had good intentions, yet nothing quite worked out for them," Lukas later told *People* magazine.<sup>15</sup> Legal and political issues are matters of character and vision. Yet Lukas's presentation is hardly neutral, for implications surround his interpretation of Yeats's lines on mind and marrow bone. Arthur Garrity (jurist, Marshall, Aquinas, mind) prevails against Ed McCormack (pragmatist, Holmes, Kennedy, marrow bone) in something of an ambiguous morality drama. Since we know the disastrous effects of pairing South Boston and Roxbury in the Phase II plan, we can only conclude that Lukas agrees with Yeats; he seems to say that Judge Garrity should have obeyed the dictates of his marrow bone—the capacity to make deals in the Irish-American political tradition—rather than the dictates of his mind alone.

In his review of *Common Ground* in the *Atlantic*, Jack Beatty agrees, suggesting

that Judge Garrity moved too relentlessly: "In this case," writes Beatty, "justice delayed might have been justice fulfilled."<sup>16</sup> Others disagreed with this reading. In his review of Lukas's book, novelist James Carroll celebrates Judge Garrity.

My own long-held conviction that Judge Garrity did this city a great service by attacking segregation at its root remains firm, despite a new appreciation for what the implementation of his order cost. Like many Boston Irish, I am proud that Garrity is one of us.<sup>17</sup>

Here the debate *within* the Boston Irish community—one of the central concerns of *Common Ground*—persists, with Beatty affirming the "marrow bone" of compromise and Carroll speaking for the "mind alone" of principle. However, Yeats's metaphorical alternative—Lukas's literary way of registering thematic points through the implications of imagery in *Common Ground*—became an unsatisfying means to gloss the issue to none other than J. Anthony Lukas, who sought to alter the terms of the discussion of Judge Garrity. Perhaps unhappy at the ways in which reviewers were interpreting Judge Garrity as they found him portrayed in *Common Ground*, Lukas took to the Op-Ed page of the *Boston Globe* to insist that

it is time we stopped making the judge a scapegoat for our own faint-heartedness. It is we as a society who shy away from the full implications of social justice; it is we, the comfortable, the decent, the well-meaning, who go on putting the burden of integration on those least able to bear it, the poor and the young.<sup>18</sup>

Here Lukas makes his charges directly, at a constituency unidentified in *Common Ground*, not obliquely through another's poetry. Further, he presents Judge Garrity with a quite different emphasis, as a hero, not as the high-minded, inflexible figure of *Common Ground*. This book, then, stirred its own tensions and inspired a range of discussion which, at the least, suggested that *Common Ground* is ambiguous.

*Common Ground* is ambiguous for the same reason it is a fascinating narrative: it has "the novelistic qualities of a thriller," as was suggested by Martin F. Nolan, editorial page editor of the *Boston Globe*, when he served as moderator to a panel discussion titled "In Search of *Common Ground*: A Town Meeting on Race and Class in Boston," held at the John F. Kennedy Library on September 28, 1985. This panel brought together some of the principal actors in Boston's school integration drama, on neutral territory, to respond to Lukas's book. Many found what they sought, as is clear from Nolan's later report in a *Globe* editorial of a particularly enlightening moment that evening.

Elvira Pixie Palladino, a member of the Boston School Committee during its fiery days of national attention, dismissed talk of love, saying that no blacks in the audience loved her. Wayne Twymon, a black graduate of the Boston public schools during that time, stood up and said, "I love you, Pixie."<sup>19</sup>

Though this report misses some of the irony in Wayne Twymon's response to Mrs. Palladino, it does accurately suggest the possibilities of dialogue brought about by time, by this occasion and, of course, by *Common Ground*. Yet, according to my transcript, Wayne Twymon's exact words were, "Before I just get into this with Pixie Palladino, which I do love you. . . ." At which point he was interrupted by laughter and applause. Perhaps the *Globe* and Lukas were hearing what they wanted to hear from Wayne Twymon, not what he said. Later in the evening, Wayne's mother, Rachel Twymon, eloquently spoke to her sense of Boston's persistent divisions:

My regret is that unsaid things are still here to plague us. . . . When adults are unable to sit around a square table or a round table and discuss issues, why would we expect our children to be able to go to school together?

*Common Ground* sought to say some of these “unsaid things,” but sought too desperately to resolve all in the name of love.

The *Globe* editorial may put too optimistic a cast on the evening’s discussion, for not all of the town came to the Town Meeting. Only two of the three families focused upon in *Common Ground* appeared, which resulted in a painful moment of epiphany that qualified the “love” expressed by Wayne Twymon. After Nolan had eloquently praised Lukas by saying he has “never seen a better book about the moved and the shaken,” Boston Mayor Raymond L. Flynn—who had, a decade before, contested Judge Garrity’s order in court—called *Common Ground* “one of the greatest stories never told.” Then Lukas spoke, to make “special mention” of the three families in *Common Ground*. He asked the three families to stand, but was visibly disturbed when he was told that none of the McGoffs had chosen to attend. Lukas expressed his “sadness,” then tried to make the best of a difficult situation, saying, “I think they are here in spirit.”<sup>20</sup> That, however, like the overvaluation of Wayne Twymon’s love for Mrs. Palladino, seemed wishful thinking, for little either in *Common Ground* or at the Town Meeting suggested that the parties which the three families represent—black, Irish American, Yankee—have resolved their differences, though some members of the actual families have arrived at better understandings of each other’s point of view. At the Kennedy Library, Joan Diver said she was amazed at Lukas’s ability to make her reexperience events through the eyes of Alice McGoff, particularly when Alice McGoff bravely and fearfully climbed Bunker Hill toward confrontation with the Boston Tactical Police Force. Yet, it became clear during the evening that many citizens of Charlestown were still affected by one of Lukas’s shrewdest points in *Common Ground*—his claim that the Boston Irish Americans whose children were integrated by court order felt a class resentment, particularly for those Irish Americans who, like Judge Garrity, Senator Ted Kennedy, and certain representatives of the Catholic Church, acted against those of their own kind; a resentment against those who had “made it” and turned their backs, as working-class Irish Americans saw it, on their community. Perhaps the eloquently absent McGoffs were among the many Charlestown citizens who felt betrayed by *Common Ground*. Perhaps the notion of “common ground” was less a fact and more a consummation devoutly to be wished.

The “novelistic qualities” noted by Nolan are evident throughout *Common Ground*, which has greater claim on the descriptive designation “nonfiction novel”<sup>21</sup> than that assigned by Aaron to *The Inman Diary*. *Common Ground* tells a story that is shaped by the vision of the teller; like other works of literary modernism—see Dos Passos’s *U.S.A.*, for example—it is designed on the psychological principle of narrative interrupted by flashback and on the cinematic principle of scenic juxtaposition. Like *U.S.A.*, it has no hero but presents a range of characters whose backgrounds are evoked in confrontations over issues great and small. Its narrative voice hovers above the drama, then slides in and out of characters’ minds in elegantly contrived mimes. *Common Ground* is an exercise in juxtaposed, controlled point of view.

Consider the following sentences from Lukas’s Author’s Note, the brief methodological reflection that precedes *Common Ground*.

This is a work of non-fiction. All its characters are real, as are their names, the places where they live, the details of their personal lives. Nothing has been disguised or embellished.

Behind the boldness of this claim lies a revealing defensiveness, for reportorial accuracy of detail does not preclude our impression that the journalist has relied upon traditional devices of the novelist to shape his material, as Truman Capote shaped *In Cold Blood*. The imposing imagination and the interpretive vision of the writer who has conducted years of research allow him a range of choice of inclusion or exclusion that approaches the novelist's choice of options, a range unavailable to the journalists who reported the Boston busing crisis as it happened. Why, for example, were *these* three families chosen? Not, Lukas grants, because they were representative of "statistical averages or norms":

On the contrary, I was drawn to them by a special intensity, an engagement with life, which made them stand out from their social context.

These vague criteria allow him to be the sole judge of their importance. His families are and are not representative, as he sees fit. Yet clearly some consideration of representativeness went into their selection on the basis of ethnicity and race, though "special intensity" adds a mysterious dimension to the selection process, a *novelistic* dimension. The sites he chose—largely Charlestown and the South End—were also places of special intensity, though not the only free-fire zones in the city; Lukas does far less with South Boston, surely the center of the controversy. He hardly touches upon Beacon Hill, whose schools were curiously less affected by the court order, or Jamaica Plain, whose already integrated schools were disrupted by Judge Garrity's order. Of course, Lukas could not do everything, particularly when he had decided to focus in on certain families, dwellings, neighborhoods. Still, it is clear that *selection is everything* in *Common Ground*, as it would be in any novel that purports to represent a social issue. The people, places, and things that lend themselves to a coherent vision are included; all else is dropped. *Common Ground* is a highly wrought literary creation with an especial purpose. In his Author's Note, Lukas hints at this purpose when he insists that his investigation yielded no "clear moral imperatives":

The realities of urban America, when seen through the lives of actual city dwellers, proved far more complicated than I had imagined.

This, then, is a work of not necessarily "average" citizens from somewhat randomly selected areas of the city, whose "intersecting lives" teach us complexity. Lukas deconstructs long-standing moral judgments, asks us to reimagine this troubled era through multiple perspectives—Charlestown's first day of court-ordered busing is seen by the frightened Alice McGoff, in her home, listening to the ominous noises outside; the same day is reseen by angry Charlestown residents, watching the buses arrive; and again, the day is rerun, this time from inside one of the buses, where terrified Cassandra Twymon is headed toward she knows not what on her first day of classes—to see, between the lines, that everyone was affected, everyone had some decent motives, everyone has a common ground of experience on which to build a future.

*Common Ground* is a myth of redemption for Bostonians, who emerge chastened but wiser, surviving what Lukas calls in his subtitle "a turbulent decade in the lives of

three American families,” surviving as well their private and public visions and interactions with conflicting concepts of community. His book demonstrates that the three families acted as they did out of their groups’ histories, memories of past victimizations, and glories that shaped their senses of the present. These families, pointedly representing the John F. Kennedy coalition of voters in 1960—a coalition so shattered by class and racial turmoil in Boston that Ted Kennedy could be chased off the City Hall Plaza in 1974 by a group of Irish-American antibusing demonstrators—have roots that Lukas traced: the Twymons in Virginia and Nova Scotia; the McGoffs-Kirks from Ireland’s Drogheda; the Divers-McKechnies from Ireland and Scotland. Lukas, through artful manipulation of contrasting perspectives, shows us the conditioning factors that made conflict inevitable for these groups. To understand is to forgive; or, at least, understanding makes it more difficult to blame. Events are selected, arranged, emphasized to illustrate the common pattern of experience that shaped the people who came into conflict during the 1970s in Boston. *Common Ground*, then, is a model of consciousness-raising, a parable, in its own way a poem, a nonfiction novel, a myth.

“Tony’s book is itself common ground,” said historian Thomas N. Brown at the Town Meeting:

It is a book immensely rich in its character. It approximates life itself and therefore has been very difficult for reviewers to deal with. But what marks the book especially . . . is that it is a loving book . . . that can move one repeatedly to tears as one proceeds through it. There *Common Ground* provides us in fact with common ground. If we are attentive to it, if we are attentive to what Tony has done, if we draw from it the love that he put into it, we surely will share together common ground.

Here Brown underlines the salvific side of *Common Ground*, which heartened panelists at the Kennedy Library conference and most readers who wished to find a way to get past the deep divisions of the busing crisis. Nonetheless, this will to believe in the reality of common ground is as much the product of a literary construction—the *book itself as common ground*, a self-referential artifact—as it is a reading of history. In a later article, calling for a reexamination of Boston’s history, Brown himself demonstrates this:

Boston is in need of a new history. The old one—handed down from the 19th century—is more trouble than it is worth. Such are the reflections that come to this reader upon completing J. Anthony Lukas’s masterful book, *Common Ground* (1985). As every literate Bostonian by now knows, the book presents to us in rich and complex detail the travail of three Boston families during the bad days of the school busing crisis. It is a story for moralists of the city convulsed by the ravages of righteous pride, of anger and fear, of cowardice and cupidity. Civility and its restraints are all but banished as the citizenry confront one another with the cruel faces of a Szep cartoon. Only the heroism of the women of these families redeems.<sup>22</sup>

Brown’s seemingly contradictory readings in fact underline the irreconcilable sides of *Common Ground*, a book which brings love to Boston families yet is stuck with the intractable facts of Boston’s persistent racial and class crises. “I do not believe busing in Boston worked as well as it might have,” Lukas told *People*. Still, the stark evidence that Lukas so effectively presents in *Common Ground* is always qualified by his sympathy and idealism, qualities that shape his book: despite Boston’s failures, he adds, “I do not believe we should give up our quest for social justice.” *Common*

*Ground* does what Lukas himself attempted to do at the Kennedy Library meeting: it asks us to hold our applause until all of his families, his "collaborators," have been introduced (it was never clear *why* we should applaud these families), but then it reveals that old angers are such that not all of these families want to take part in a ritual of redemption.

For all that, myths are true, too, and *Common Ground* has, in its own limited terms, created a compelling, moving myth on the dissolution and need for new resolution of community. It may be the only *place* where such divergent elements can stand together.

Characteristically, Thoreau carefully totted up the separate costs that went into his "tight shingled and plastered house" at Walden Pond, far from the madding demands of community. Apparently a minimal revisionist when he built in wood rather than words, Thoreau noted the one cent he spent for chalk:

I give the details because very few are able to tell exactly what their houses cost, and fewer still, if any, the separate cost of the various materials which compose them.

Total cost: \$28.12½. Labor (his own); land (Emerson's); borrowed tools and contributed supplies: not counted. Perhaps there is justice to the charge by James Russell Lowell that Thoreau's experiment "actually presupposed all the complicated civilization which it theoretically abjured."<sup>23</sup> Of course, Thoreau, as we have seen, was counting costs on still another, far less exact scale: "the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run." In *House* — a study of the building of a house in Amherst, Massachusetts, during the spring and summer of 1983; a study, as well, of the people who committed part of their lives to its building—Tracy Kidder also uses Thoreau's double-entry bookkeeping, measuring costs in a variety of ways. At one level the Amherst house cost its owners \$146,660, just for Apple Corps, the builders, but at another level, the house was built at the cost of disillusionment for all concerned. The house stands as a symbol of conflict and compromise, the partially satisfactory resolution of contending wills and values, an artifact of civilization.

For those involved, the house began as a vision of renewal, bits of which survived the expense of spirit it took to bring the house into being. Owners Judith and Jonathan Souweine—who, like Thoreau, had land contributed for their building site—sought more space and felicity. They had been deeply engaged in their community: Jonathan had worked in the office of the state attorney general; headed a consumer protection group (MassPIRG); even ran for and lost an election for district attorney for Hampshire and Franklin counties. Judith was doing postdoctoral work on childhood learning disabilities and was involved in many community affairs. Yet the house represented an ideal vision of the single, separate family for both: "It's us against the world," explained Judith Souweine.

Architect Bill Rawn had been the campus representative who had reviewed the building of the Boston campus of the University of Massachusetts in the mid 1960s—"architecture at its most mundane, but it put me in deeper touch with it, and my art was going well." Though Kidder does not mention it, Rawn must have been disappointed by the compromises required in such public architecture and the corruptions involved in its building, later revealed by an investigatory commission headed by John William Ward, the former president of Amherst College who

reentered the public sector with a passionate idealism in his inquiry into corruptions related to the awarding of building contracts in Massachusetts. Rawn went the other way, from Boston's public sector to another Amherst private sphere of excellence, to design a beautiful house for his friends the Souweines. He was impelled by an intriguing aesthetic vision. Aware of a special "sense of place, and then how to fit a building into it," he had been concerned since his days as an architecture student at M.I.T. with "balance" and "a sense of edges." "Where meadow meets woods, that's where you want to put a house," he said. Despite all of the compromises, this, finally, is just what he did. Rawn *placed* the Souweine house at the edge of the woods, where there was, in LeCorbusier's words, "protection against the arbitrary." This became Rawn's haven against the compromises of the public sector.

Jim Locke was the spokesman for Apple Corps, the builders, and he shared Rawn's aesthetic interests:

The interesting parts are the edges. Where things come together. The middle parts that are all the same are not so interesting to me.

Yet his interests were more functional than Rawn's:

What quality means to me is how tightly things fit together. Joints are the essence of it to me.

Apple Corps itself was a loosely joined group of young men, along with their wives and lovers, who sought what used to be called an alternative lifestyle. They came from Apple Valley, a dozen miles west and north of Amherst, where they lived in semicomunal fashion, seeking—as Thoreau, alone, sought at Walden—to confront life more directly, to make their separate peace with urban terrors. (One of the workers, Alex Ghiselin—he had attended Dartmouth, had worked for Gene McCarthy in 1968, and had been a *Boston Globe* reporter; then he gave all that up—enjoyed bringing the *New York Times* to work so he could read aloud items of what he called "murders and mayhem" from the paper's "Metropolitan Reports," taking comfort from how he and his friends had said goodbye to all that.) They had been drawn to Apple Valley for its clean air, its woods, its feel of renewal; it was their fresh, green breast of a new world. But all had not gone smoothly in Apple Valley, for Jim Locke left his wife for the wife of another resident and moved out with her, leaving behind injured parties and lost illusions of community. Other workers on the Souweine house were also thinking about moving, so the idea of *place* was yielding to the concept of *work* as haven for these young men. The Souweine house, their largest undertaking, represented a certification for Apple Corps and each of its members.

For Jim Locke, the Souweine house was, as Kidder put it, an attempt at "reconciliation of his vision of what he might have been and what he is and what he could become." However, Locke's efforts partially failed; he concluded the job with headaches, less money than he had hoped, and a sense that he had been exploited. For Bill Rawn, too, the clean lines of his original conception of the house had been blurred in the building of it, just as the actual lines of his blueprint were reconceived by the Souweines and blunted by Locke. Jonathan Souweine, exasperated at one point, said, "Architects and builders, Arabs and Jews. They don't get along." *House* suggests that things were worse than that, for misunderstanding and conflict were triangular, between architects, builders, and owners. Feeling that Apple Corps had had their original bid unfairly knocked down by \$660, Locke uses #2 pine on the

house's frieze board, though he knows the knots will later bleed through white paint. "There, Jonathan, there's your six hundred and sixty dollars." The most painful moment of *House* occurs when Rawn sees that the Souweines, at Locke's suggestion, have approved the use of mismatched second-quality bricks in the fireplace around which Rawn has designed the house. Rawn is stunned, his ideal vision of the house smudged.

Kidder senses that often the builders wished the house to become their version of the pastoral, a retreat, a haven:

First thing in the mornings, the house has a sylvan stillness, while the carpenters settle into their work.

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However, more often than not the building site became a battle ground, not a common ground. Still, the house got built, though it was a product of disputation and compromise, not, as the Puritan settlers would have a house, an imitation of divine handiwork, a protection against what William Bradford called (as Kidder reminds us) "a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men."

The New England wilderness, of course, has long since been transformed by development; its lost wildness is best recollected in civilized tranquillity, like Maxine Kumin's moose, though tranquillity leaks away when we think of the threats embedded in the bone of what we call civilization. "The art of civilization is the art of drawing lines," wrote Oliver Wendell Holmes in a sentence cited by Kidder. These writers draw fine lines, shape fitting emblems, build structures of understanding on the edges, not between community and a hideous and desolate wilderness, but between civilization and its discontented.

In a way, Thoreau had it easier. He "went to the woods"—though Walden could, even then, be seen as more of a park preserve—"to front only the essential facts of life." He was never shaken from his belief that nature, represented by his mini-frontier, was essential and civilization peripheral. Whenever he wished, he decided—on "a majority of one" vote—to dissolve his bond with trivial civilization and turn again to the profound woods. In *Civil Disobedience* he demonstrated that even arrest—with the impingements posed to his freedom by enforcers of community values—did not impress him.

I was put into jail as I was going to the shoemaker's to get a shoe which was mended. When I was let out the next morning, I proceeded to finish my errand, and, having put on my mended shoe, joined a huckleberry party, who were impatient to put themselves under my conduct; and in half an hour—for the horse was soon tackled—was in the midst of a huckleberry field, on one of our highest hills, two miles off, and then the State was nowhere to be seen.<sup>24</sup>

The books under consideration in this essay suggest an answer to Thoreau's easy assertion of a separate peace between himself and the state: "Isn't it pretty to think so?" as Hemingway's Jake Barnes said to Lady Brett Ashley. That is, it is no longer so easy to go to the woods either to confront the essential or to escape the encroachments of civilization. Even in Thoreau's examples—his parables—his hut at Walden is subsidized and his trek after arrest is for huckleberry picking with a group "under my conduct," an assertion of communal control which recalls the imprisoning heroes of *The Nuclear Age* and *The Inman Diary*.

Today Thoreau would find no place to build his hut; if he did, he would be unable to build on his meager resources; if he were able to build, he would have to be

certified and taxed by several state agencies; if he did all that, he would still be vulnerable to nuclear and other assaults posed by “civilized” societies: nuclear annihilation; class and racial turmoil; public policies that seek to remedy injustices, do so, yet have the effect of creating further inequities. No haven. In short, he would be in exactly the condition of those writers here examined.

What then must we do? asked Tolstoy. These writers have chosen to develop appropriate metaphors for the modern condition, as they see it, images placed in a local context, fitting emblems of adversity; they have created figures of sufficient interest who suffer various states of siege, figures who redefine their relationships with community, figures who seek refuge from threat inside houses that serve as momentary stays against confusion. These writers have built, as did Yeats’s honeybees, in the empty houses of the stare; most have shored up the mortar of the larger house of American civilization, in which we all live. They have added to our sense of who we are and where we live by creating landscapes of imagination and houses of fiction, fact, and poetry.

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## Notes

1. Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (1854); Carl Bode, ed., *The Portable Thoreau*, rev. (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 286.
2. Daniel Aaron, ed., *The Inman Diary: A Public and Private Confession*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985); Frank Conroy, *Midair* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1985); Tracy Kidder, *House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1985); Maxine Kumin, *The Long Approach* (New York: Viking-Penguin, 1985); J. Anthony Lukas, *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985); Tim O’Brien, *The Nuclear Age* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985).
3. Eudora Welty, “Place in Fiction,” *The Eye of the Storm* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 122.
4. Josephine Hendin, *Vulnerable People: A View of American Fiction Since 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 11.
5. William Butler Yeats, “A Prayer for My Daughter,” in *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1964), 185–87.
6. Inman began advertising for “talkers” in the *Boston Evening Transcript* in December 1924.
7. Aaron, in a letter to Edna Coffin Mercer Kim, a former resident of Garrison Hall, in *The Inman Diary*, 1532.
8. Louis Auchincloss, “Telling All,” *New York Review of Books* 32, no. 15 (10 October 1985): 4.
9. Tim O’Brien in an interview with the author on “The Ten O’Clock News,” WGBH-TV, 17 October 1985.
10. Isabel Colegate, *A Glimpse of Sion’s Glory and Other Stories* (New York: Viking-Penguin, 1985), 134.
11. Seamus Heaney, “Feeling into Words,” in *Preoccupations* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980), 56.
12. Gail Caldwell, Review of *The Nuclear Age*, *Boston Globe* (“Books”), 22 September 1985, A-11.
13. “[Country] suggests everything from the actual countryside that the novelist describes, on to and through the peculiar characteristics of his region and his nation, and on, through, and under all of these to his true country, which the writer with Christian convictions will consider to be what is eternal and absolute.” Flannery O’Connor, “The Fiction Writer and His Country,” in *Mystery and Manners*, ed. Sally and Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1961), 27.
14. “But I have the imagination of disaster—and see life as ferocious and sinister.” From a letter to

A. C. Benson, 1896. Cited in F. W. Dupee, *Henry James* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1951), 192.

15. Deirdre Donahue, "Pages," *People* (13 January 1986): 63.
16. Jack Beatty, "Race, Class, and the City," *Atlantic* (September 1985): 110.
17. James Carroll, Review of *Common Ground*, *Boston Globe* ("Books"), 8 September 1985, B-16.
18. J. Anthony Lukas, "Garrity as Scapegoat," *Boston Globe*, 18 September 1985, 14.
19. "In Search of Common Ground," *Boston Globe*, 1 October 1985, 12.
20. Remarks excerpted from author's recording of "In Search of *Common Ground*: A Town Meeting on Race and Class in Boston," held at the John F. Kennedy Library, 28 September 1985.
21. The term *nonfiction novel* has been credited to Truman Capote, who used it to describe *In Cold Blood* (1965). For a discussion, see Frederick R. Karl, *American Fictions 1940-1980* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 560-90.
22. Thomas N. Brown, "Boston's Past: History as Common Ground," *Boston Sunday Globe*, 29 December 1985, A-13.
23. Cited in Edward Wagenknecht, *Henry David Thoreau* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), 99.
24. Carl Bode, ed., *The Portable Thoreau, Civil Disobedience*, 130.



